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The need now is for all bickering factions to settle their differences and unite in a common cause.

I therefore call on the two rival candidates, the extreme right-winger Mr. Charles Moore, and the Europhile Mr. Dominic Lawson, to bury the hatchet or face oblivion, leaving the field open to my rival Mr. Murdoch.

E. Strobes
pp Lord Conrad Gnome
Torygraph Central Office
Duncan Smith Square
London SW1

"...and here's one of me in Genoa."

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ABC

Read all about twit!

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DURING Michael Portillo's schooldays he used to introduce himself with the words: "My name is Portillo – but if you write it backwards it spells Ollitrop."

When the nickname Ollitrop caught on, the more erudite pupils noticed that it also seemed to derive from the ancient Greek – *oligos* meaning "little", and *tropias* meaning "sour".

Prophetic, eh?

THE ARREST and indictment last week in Georgia of a junior Drugs Enforcement Administration official is being eyed with concern by a number of London's lawyers and journalists. And with good reason.

Dr. Jonathan Randel used to be an intelligence analyst in the DEA's Atlanta office, but left in a hurry when investigators, in pursuit of the source of DEA files acquired by *The Times* and used by the paper in its campaign against Tory moneybags, Michael Ashcroft, seized Randel's computer. Photographed extracts from the files were published in July 1999, prompting Ashcroft to sue. An unedifying court hearing was later averted through the personal intervention of Rupert Murdoch, but not before Randel had been flown to London for a de-brief by the lawyers preparing the case.

Thus it was that *The Times*'s Head of Legal Affairs, Alastair Brett; Theodore Goddard's partner, Rupert Earle; and barrister Heather Rogers, now of Matrix Chambers; together with a full supporting cast of journalists and juniors, came face-to-face with Randel. In a packed meeting room in the Waldorf Hotel, the legal team heard how and where their key documents had been created. Slowly, the realisation amongst the lawyers dawned that News International had paid large sums of money – mostly via freelance journalist Toby Follett but some direct – to a US Government Official in exchange for classified government files.

The relief was palpable when Ashcroft's action was shelved. The world would be deprived forever, for instance, of the troubling prospect of George Carman cross-examining *The Times*'s Deputy Political Editor, Tom Baldwin, about the finer points (or should that be lines?) of the international drugs trade. And it meant that Randel could be allowed to slide back under whichever rock he had emerged from, with luck never to be heard of again.

They had, however, reckoned without the intelligence and tenacity of the DEA, who followed the forensic trail right back to Randel's computer, and thence to Randel himself. Released on $35,000 surety, his future prospects look distinctly uncomfortable.

But this may well not be the end of it. The DEA's reach is long, and it remains to be seen who else is in the agency's sights. Hence the nervousness at the Wig & Pen.

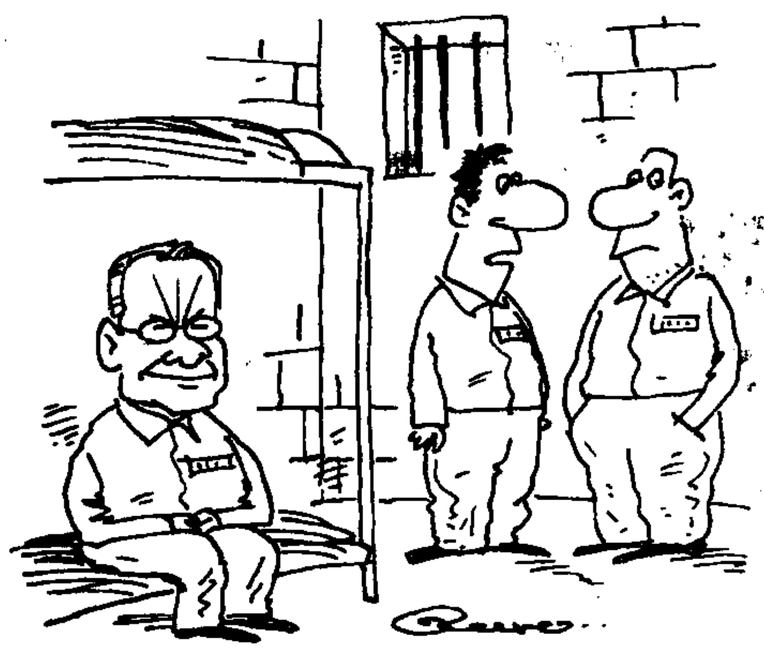
SO THE QUEEN, Downing Street, Charles, Anne and the Buckingham Palace top brass all "gave in" to Prince Philip's insistence that the junior royals should be able to carry on earning a living in the real world – or so the papers would have us believe. But the truth is far more interesting.

After Sophiegate the lord chamberlain, Lord Luce, was asked by Brenda to report on "resolving possible areas of conflict" between being royal and earning a living. The press, then still in hot pursuit of the badly-shaken Wessex girl, interpreted this as Brenda saying that Sophie would have to give-up her job with R-JH communications and become a dutiful royal housewife (opening fetes, skiing, having affairs, that sort of thing). Knock-on effects to other royals were also expected, most notably in trimming the extravagances of prince and princess Michael of Kent, the infamous "royals for hire" who live in luxury apartments at Kensington Palace for a rent of £75 per week.

But Luce's report contained exactly the opposite conclusions. Junior royals can carry on working – but they must consult Luce before undertaking any royal engagements so that he can examine any possible conflicts of interest. Leaks began to flow both from the Palace press office and Downing Street that Luce had "gone soft"; rather than admit they had got it wrong the tabloids decided that Philip had single-handedly overcome all opposition because he has a soft-spot for Sophie! He did once admire Sophie's down-to-earth approach but after reading her indiscretions in the *NoW* he changed his attitude. Besides, his opinion of Edward, who left the marines to become a tea boy for Andrew Lloyd Webber, has rarely left the gutter.

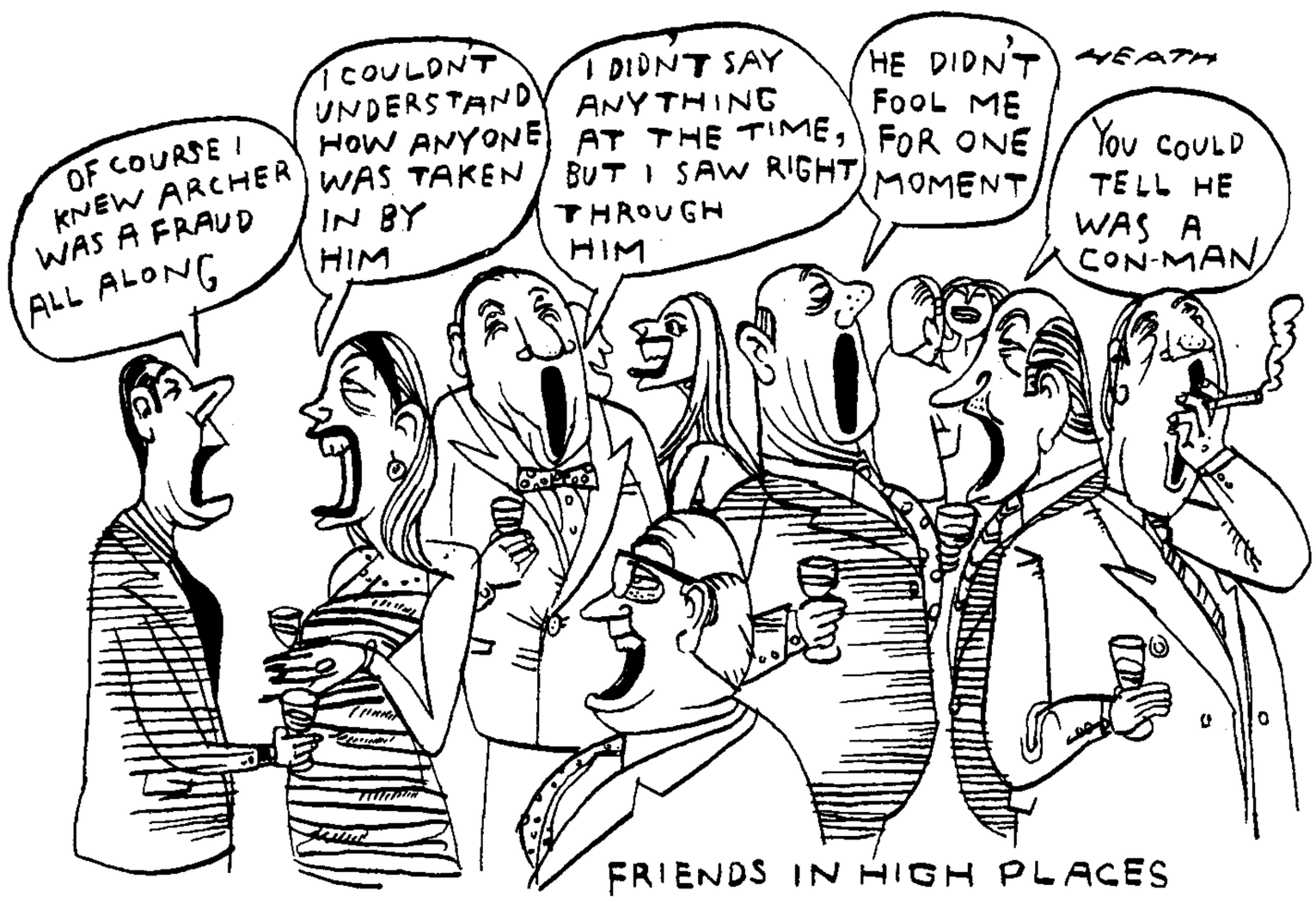
In fact the Luce report is exactly what Brenda asked for. It fits neatly with her overall strategy for preserving the House of Windsor. This includes putting the public spotlight back onto the senior royals and leaving the junior ones to look after themselves, with Luce appointed as their new guardian; and the projected handback of civil list payments to the government by 2008 which will mean that only a central nucleus of royals will be supportable by self-generated royal finances. With all this, Philip agrees.

The biggest sufferers from Luce's new role are the Kents. Until now they had done quite well renting themselves out to the highest bidders, but their engagement books will increasingly come under Luce's scrutiny. Princess Michael was so put-out by this potential clipping of her wings that she penned an angry letter to Brenda threatening to have nothing whatsoever to do with the new "regime". A tactful reply was drafted for Brenda which pointed out that the report had also decided not to alter the peppercorn rent arrangements the Kents enjoy, but, of course, that could always be reviewed...



"He says he's doing 30 years for the world's biggest bullion raid"

ARCHER SPECIAL: JEFF IN BIN


OF COURSE I KNEW ARCHER WAS A FRAUD ALL ALONG
I COULDN'T UNDERSTAND HOW ANYONE WAS TAKEN IN BY HIM
I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING AT THE TIME, BUT I SAW RIGHT THROUGH HIM
HE DIDN'T FOOL ME FOR ONE MOMENT
YOU COULD TELL HE WAS A CON-MAN
HEATH
FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES

THE THINGS THEY SAY

"If someone has 17 previous offences for robbery, it might just be a clue that while out on bail they will do it again, and can I add that I am sick and tired of reading about young offenders who put two fingers up to the police because they know that they can go and commit exactly the same offence again without any fear of being punished."

– Jeffrey Archer, speaking in the law 'n' order debate at the Conservative party conference, 6 October 1993

THE *Daily Star* is demanding £2.2m – "not a penny more, not a penny less" – following Lord Archole's conviction. And everyone seems to agree that this is right and proper.

Er, up to a point. One crucial fact was lost amid the torrent of Archer coverage last week: that the *Star*'s original story was total bollocks, and could never have been defended successfully even if Archer hadn't resorted to his elaborate perjury plot.

The *Star*'s "exclusive" in 1986 was based on an interview with Monica Coghlan's nephew Tony Smith, a wide boy with whom she had very little contact and with whom (by her own admission) she had never discussed her encounter with the priapic Tory.

The front-page story, for which Smith was paid £500, graphically described Monica's "kinky sex" with Archer and claimed he was a regular client. None of this came from Monica herself. By then she was being "minded" by the *News of the Screws* and not talking to anyone else.

Monica was adamant that she'd had only one brief encounter with the man she later identified as Archer, and had never seen him before or since. The *Screws*, showing rather more caution than the *Star*, therefore splashed on the undeniable sensation of Archer paying her to leave the country, leaving it up to readers to work out why the deputy chairman of the Conservative Party would show such generosity to a lady of the night.

Although Archer issued a writ against the *Screws*, the Dirty Digger's lawyers were confident they could defend their story – and some of Archer's own legal team later admitted privately that they probably wouldn't have pursued the case all the way to the High Court. The *Daily Star*'s reckless and badly sourced follow-up thus came as manna from heaven. Archer's lawyers exercised their prerogative to take the *Star* to court first, rather than the *Screws*.

In the witness box, Coghlan insisted that she did indeed have sex with Archer at the Albion hotel in September 1986. When asked about the *Star* article, however, she admitted that it was almost all invention. "The only true part is that I went to bed with Jeffrey Archer. The rest of it is sheer fantasy." She described her nephew Tony Smith as "a compulsive liar who fantasises a lot. He's spun them a yarn and they've fallen for it and printed it."

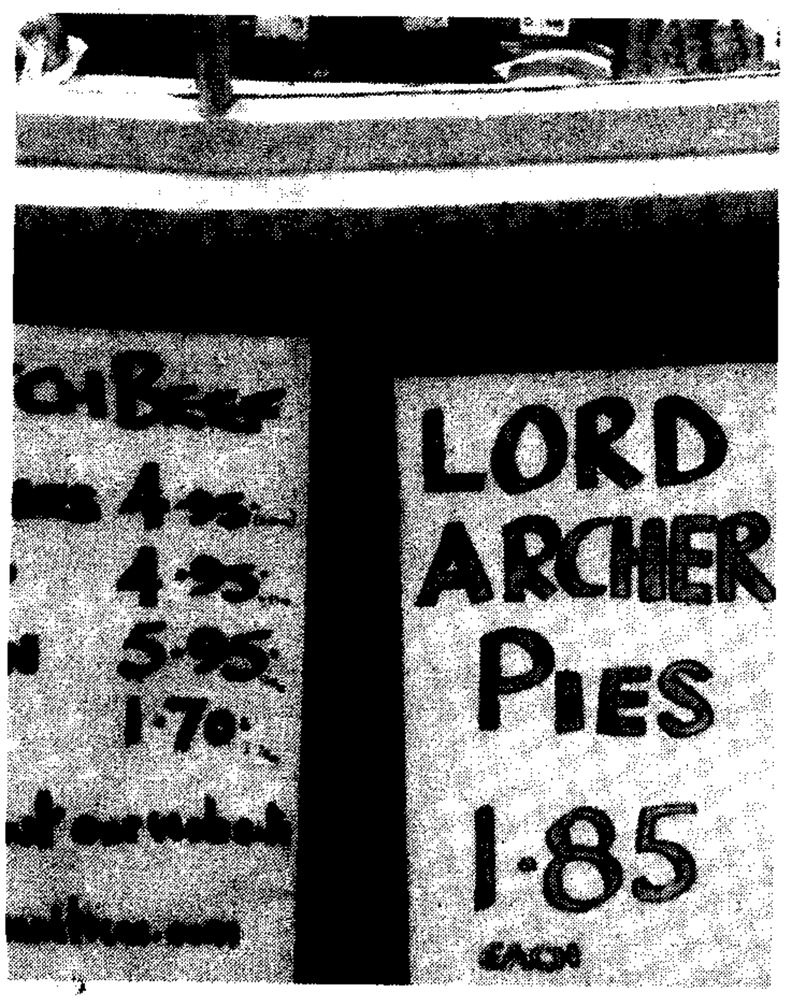
Stuck with a dud story and a worthless source, the *Star* had to beg and even subpoena executives from the *News of the Screws* to give evidence for them. Archer's counsel then managed to trap David "Rommel" Montgomery, then editor of the *Screws*, into admitting under oath that his paper wanted readers to believe that Archer had slept with Coghlan, even though what he actually published had stopped short of that and *Screws* hack John Lisners had previously denied any such implication. "There would be no other reason for paying the prostitute if he had not slept with her," Rommel conceded after persistent questioning from Robert Alexander QC. "I think that is the conclusion people would draw."

As a consequence the *Screws* later had to settle with Archer, albeit for a comparatively modest £50,000. Lawyers for the *Screws* now plan to sue him for £500,000 to cover the settlement, costs and interest charges.

Fair enough, maybe. But would it be churlish to suggest that the self-righteous *Star* scarcely deserves a £2.2m windfall, given that its article was a fiction worthy of the master story-teller himself?

PS: Jill Turner, widow of Lloyd Turner, the *Daily Star* editor responsible for the Archer debacle, has been telling the papers that the loss of the Archer libel case drove her husband into an early grave. In fact Turner, who continued to work in Fleet St after being sacked by the *Star*, did not have his fatal heart attack until 10 years later. Former colleagues who read Mrs Turner's emotional interview with the *Sunday Torygraph* "now [Lloyd] has had his reputation restored" – remember a joke about Turner that could easily have been applied to Archer himself: "How can you tell when Lloyd is lying? His lips are moving..."

I-SPY *Butcher's shop, Alton, Hants*



IN JANUARY 1997 Archer accepted an invitation from the Lebanese businessman Charles Riachy to spend a few happy nights in Riachy's spacious villa in Palma, Majorca.

A fax to Mr Riachy from Archer's secretary at the House of Lords, Tessa Darling, indicated that Lord Archer would be staying for a fortnight. The fax went on: "Lord Archer's dietary requirement are as follows: Breakfast, fresh fruit, cornflakes, muesli. No coffee or tea. Lunch: Iceberg lettuce and tomato salad with either chicken breast or avocado, and a thin vinaigrette dressing. Evening: to be discussed on a daily basis." Attached "to simplify things" was a copy of "Jeffrey's Food Combining Chart" setting out what foods he could and could not have at a meal at the same time.

PS: Archer's influence on Charles Riachy does not seem to have spread to politics. Mr Riachy was one of the businessman who donated handsomely (£5,000) to the election campaign expenses of the Leicester Labour MP, Keith Vaz.

On the day after his mother's funeral, the devout Lord Archer turned up at the Sunday service in Belmarsh prison chapel.

By an amazing coincidence, the chaplain took as his text the story of Cain and Abel (not to be confused with Jeffrey's bestseller *Kane and Abel*). The moral of the tale, he warned, was that "cheats and liars will be found out – because God is watching you".

WILL Archer's prison sentence earn him some godly assistance from former Tory MP and born-again Christian Sir Tom Benyon?

When Jonathan "sword of truth" Aitken found himself detained at Her Majesty's pleasure, Benyon asked Archer to join a prayer circle devoted to Aitken in his hour of need. Aitken, in turn, was one of the first to appear on television to defend Archer's honour. Sir Tom should waste no time in getting on the blower so that the Tory faithful's prayers for the great perjurer wing heavenward without delay.

IF LORD BIRT wishes to make his mark as the government's "crime tsar" – something he has so far conspicuously failed to do – before Tony Blair sends him to Whitehall to shake up the bureaucracy (tremble in your boots, Sir Humphrey!) he could do worse than point the finger at those who offered protection to Jeffrey Archer in former days.

One of this number is the BBC bigwig who ditched the definitive *Panorama* investigation into Archer by his biographer Michael Crick, on the grounds that the Beeb did not want to "kick a man while he is down". Who was this lofty decision-maker who consigned the Archer documentary to darkness until it was revived by Greg Dyke on the day the fallen lord was sentenced to jail? Step forward former BBC director-general, Lord Birt.

AS EVERYONE has pointed out ad nauseam, the truth of Jeffrey Archer's life is, er, stranger than fiction.

The strain of distinguishing between the two was clearly too much for hacks at BBC Ceefax, where the great perjurer was described thus: "Lord Archer, who lives in London and Ambridge…"

A story for the *Borchester Echo*, perhaps?

O·B·N

SIR – Mary Archer's admirable composure under untenable duress is of no real surprise.

She is a product of Cheltenham Ladies' College, where self-discipline, self-control and self-reliance were the norm; the college motto being *Coelesti Luce Crescat* (May she grow in heavenly light).

CAROLYN MELVILLE-SMITH,
Cheltenham, Glos
(Letter to Daily Telegraph)

Nominated by David Birnbaum

£10 paid for entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

JUST FANCY THAT!

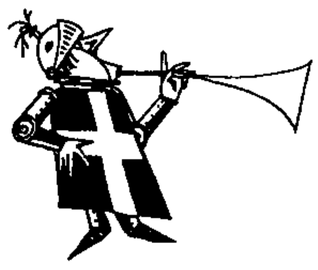
"Jeffrey Archer is Essex Man's idea of financial, social and literary success. That is not meant to sound like faint praise. It implies, among other things, that he makes vast sums of money, throws highly publicised parties attended by dozens of famous people, and has written some of the best-selling books of our age. It also helps explain his elevation to the House of Lords, announced last night. The Conservative party won the last four general elections in large part because it knows how to appeal to Essex Man, and to the aspiring classes generally. Archer has worked extremely hard encouraging such people to vote Tory, and is far better at it than most Cabinet ministers. Hence the high value Margaret Thatcher and John Major place on his political services, now rewarded with a peerage… Many other people who used to detest him seem to think he has been punished enough. There is a general inclination to give him the benefit of the doubt… If classlessness means anything, it means letting a man like him into the House of Lords."

– *Daily Telegraph*, 13 June 1992

"At the height of his success, it almost seemed that [Archer] was being offered to the public on a tray as a sample of what it meant to be a successful Conservative. As his own tale became less convincing, so he was advanced by the party, first to the Lords and then to candidacy as Mayor of London. What a want of judgment!"

– *Daily Telegraph*, 20 July 2001

"But he told me he wasn't Lord Archer, sir! So I let him go"



EYE TOLD YOU SO – 32 YEARS AGO

A CURIOUS feature of the perjury trial of Jeffrey Archer was the decision to challenge the devastating evidence of his former secretary, Angela Peppiatt, by accusing her of fiddling her expenses.

The thought must have come naturally to Jeffrey Archer, who first achieved publicity in the *Eye* through his own penchant for fiddling expenses. In "the Humphrey and Jeffrey Laugh-in" (*Eye* 208, 5 December 1969) we set out the detailed allegations by Humphrey Berkeley, then chairman of the United Nations Association, as to how the young Archer had fiddled his expenses at the UNA by charging the association for a meal paid for by someone else.

The revelations caused the *Eye* to suggest to Berkeley that Archer (who was Tory candidate in a by-election for a safe Tory seat) might not be the right sort of person to go to Parliament. This drew from Berkeley the immortal (and prophetic) response: "Parliament? He should be in a remand home!"

NB: Archer's expertise with expenses forms was speedily recognised by his Tory colleagues on the Greater London Council, to which he was elected in 1967. They hired him to fill out their expense forms in exchange for a fee: 10 per cent of what he charged. Other early *Eye* stories on Archer from those days are in numbers 251, 255, 259 and 304 – all more than 30 years ago.

Lord Archer-super-Mare, as he is known formally, has been the subject of fiercely denied allegations over the years

New York Times

IN SPITE of the overwhelming evidence against his client, Jeffrey Archer's barrister Nicholas Purnell QC did not expect to lose the case, citing in support of his confidence his own formidable record at the bar. His clients, however, have not always succeeded.

In a 1992 case more serious even than that of Lord Archer, Mr Purnell represented a music teacher, Sheila Bowler, who was accused of murdering her aunt. The aunt, Florence Jackson, was 82 years old, and was found drowned in the river Breede. Sussex police enthusiastically latched on to the theory that Mrs Bowler had driven to a spot near the river bank, forced her aunt out of the car and tossed her into the river. Her motive for this was allegedly that she hoped to get hold of her aunt's money. Despite the preposterous nature of this proposition (Mrs Bowler had always looked after all her elderly relatives and had plenty of money of her own), a jury convicted her of murder. One problem was that no one could suggest any other way in which Mrs Jackson could have met her death. Defence and prosecution at trial combined to agree that the old lady could not have walked the relatively short distance to the river, and that therefore she must have been murdered.

In September 1994, a *Trial and Error* programme on the case proved that in fact the old lady could walk quite a long way unaided, and was especially likely to do so when suffering from fear or stress. If, as Mrs Bowler claimed, she had been left in the car while Mrs Bowler went for help with a punctured tyre, she may well have been stressed, and could quite easily have left the car, tottered along the road and fallen into the river. Nevertheless, Mrs Bowler's appeal was turned down.

Yet another programme was made by *Trial and Error*, dealing once more with the much more likely theory that Mrs Jackson herself walked to her accidental death. The programme led to yet another appeal, which this time was successful, and Mrs Bowler was cleared and released.

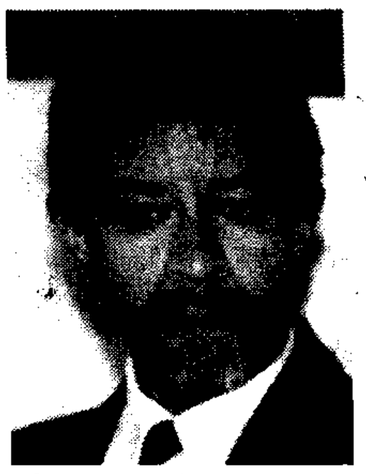
MAN IN THE EYE

LORD OUSELEY

WHEN Sir Herman Ouseley chucked in his job last year as chairman of the commission for racial equality (CRE) half-way through his second term, students of the race watchdog searched for a motive.

There was talk of disaffection with "new" Labour. Sir Herman himself said it was for personal reasons. As he was already earning £81,000 a year, few suspected it had anything to do with a desire for more money. But pension planning, in fact, has always been a priority for the former head of the CRE.

A major accomplishment in office was his conclusion of a five-year programme of reform with the army after a formal CRE investigation found rampant racial discrimination in the Household Cavalry. That programme ended in 1998. In 1999 the ministry of defence (MoD) struck a three-year deal worth £5m with a firm called Focus-Consultancy Ltd. Focus specialises in providing race relations advice to companies and institutions that are worried about being accused of discrimination and wish to bring their equality practices up to scratch. It also happens to have several former CRE commissioners on its payroll. Ouseley joined Focus just two days after leaving the CRE.



Ouseley: busy man

He soon secured further gainful employment in the offices of Hackney council. Under Ouseley's leadership the CRE had found Hackney guilty of racial discrimination in 1998 and agreed a five-year plan of reform. In December 2000 Hackney announced it was employing Ouseley, by now also managing director of race-consultancy firm Different Realities Partnership Ltd, to help in the reforms.

Ouseley's consultancy career had taken off long before his resignation from the CRE. In the aftermath of the Lawrence report his services were hired by the Metropolitan police for a "commercially confidential" amount. The figure is unlikely to be insubstantial since the Met has been one of the most extravagant spenders on race advice. By the time Judge McPherson pronounced his verdict of "institutional racism", it had already spent an estimated £9m procuring specialist race advice.

This year Ouseley was picked by Bradford council to conduct a race relations review in the city despite local opposition to a "parachuted" candidate and the contract not being put out to tender. His report was published days after the city erupted in riots earlier this month. Again, it was for a "commercially confidential" sum – thought to be not far short of £30,000.

Earlier this year he was chosen as one of 15 "people's peers" supposedly nominated by the public. By an amazing coincidence, Ouseley was one of those asked to appoint members to the House of Lords appointments commission… which in turn nominated him from thousands selected by the public.

Quite why Ouseley's star is so much in the ascendant is a bit of a puzzle, especially given the shambles he left behind at the CRE. This was best illustrated by the leaked results of an "Investors in People" audit in March. The audit is carried out on organisations that apply for that prestigious company cachet, the Investors in People Standard. One of the criteria the CRE fell short on was… equal opportunities.

Street Of Shame

"TWO WEEKS AGO, this newspaper warned that Kenneth Clarke's presence on the final shortlist of two in the Conservative leadership contest would have a deeply divisive effect upon the party – a prophecy which, regrettably, is already coming to pass."

Thus began a lengthy and solemn editorial in last weekend's *Sunday Telegraph*. Anyone looking up the issue in question – 8 July – may notice another confident prediction about the Tory leadership contest, published on the front page. "Kenneth Clarke will fail to make the final shortlist in the Conservative leadership contest," the paper revealed, "depriving grassroots members of the chance to vote for the most popular Tory in the country at large, an exclusive *Sunday Telegraph* survey reveals today."

Curiously, the self-congratulatory editorial omitted to mention this remarkable feat of prophecy.

THE *SUN* has given another bravura display of bet-hedging. Knowing that the Dirty Digger likes to back winners (whether Thatcher or Blair), editor David Yelland waited to see which way the wind was blowing before expressing a preference in the Tory leadership contest.

"We've heard from all five contenders... And yesterday the nominations closed for the top job. Excuse us while we snore... In all honesty, these Tory pretenders are uninspiring." (6 July.)

"Kenneth Clarke and Iain Duncan Smith would each divide, rather than unite, the party because of their deeply-held, opposing views on Europe." (10 July.)

When Duncan Smith won enough votes to go through to the final, however, the paper had a sudden rethink: "Iain Duncan Smith… is a decent man the whole Tory party can believe in, a man for whom the party can campaign wholeheartedly." (18 July.)

How he will do so while also "dividing" the party with his views is a mystery which only Rupert Murdoch and David Yelland can explain.

THE latest pyramid-selling scam to have swept the UK, Women Empowering Women (WEW) was the subject of a shocking exposé in the *Independent on Sunday* on 22 July.

"Career women lose thousands at doomed pyramid scheme 'parties'," warned the *Sindy*. The article explained that the scheme works by persuading women to part with an initial investment of £3,000 in the hope of receiving £24,000 after other women have joined lower down the chain. "WEW is doomed to failure – it is simple arithmetic," the piece concluded. "As more people join the scheme, more are needed. But when investors dry up, thousands will be left penniless."

There is surely no connection between the *Sindy* story and posters found plastered around the women's lo[os]t the *Indep[en]dent* offices earlier this month which read: "Make money!!! Earn literally thousands!!!!! Small initial investment required. Call X on extension XXXX. Women only"? Can *Sindy* hackettes really be that hard up?

THE THINGS THEY SAY

"I DON'T need to say anything on national TV. TV isn't the place to discuss anything Helen and I have to talk about. *The Mirror* is my outlet."

– Gavin "Big G" Cox, on the need to discuss his relationship with *Big Brother*'s Helen Adams in the privacy of, er, the national press.

The Mirror

THERE is no slackening in Paul Dacre's determination to fill the *Daily Mail* with pictures of scantily clad women, usually under the guise of "lifestyle" features or some such tosh.

A classic of the genre was the double page spread on 6 July, headed: "Your face or your figure: which do men prefer? We answer the question every woman asks herself." Among the five allegedly ordinary women paraded in their undies for this important research project was one Maria Sheriff, described as a psychology student from Guildford. "Men tend to look at my eyes first," she told the *Mail*. "I have the sort of figure that isn't particularly noticeable."

Except when posing nude, presumably. What the *Mail* neglected to mention is that Maria is actually a "glamour model", well known to readers of the *Sun*'s Page 3 as well as rather more "adult" mags. Type her name into the Google search engine and you will be rewarded with scores of photos of the gorgeous pouter stark naked, plus details of the agencies which represent her.

"I don't dress in a revealing manner – I mostly wear trousers," the bashful psychology student told the *Mail*. And when the paper's male judges raved about her body, she claimed to be "flattered and surprised that the panel were more attracted to my figure than my face".

Not *that* surprising, surely, when you consider how much money she has earned from permitting men to examine her body in minute detail?

THERE'S been a falling out between two Murdoch titles - the *News of the World* and its transatlantic sister the *New York Post*. The latter made the mistake of using an *NoW* "interview" with gorgeous, pouting singer-actress Jennifer Lopez.

In this "world exclusive" Lopez revealed that she was planning a wedding and having a child with new boyfriend Cris Judd, "facts" which the *Post* eagerly relayed to its readers. "I feel I've found my soul mate in Cris. He makes me laugh, and I feel so comfortable with him. I can't imagine life without him," it reported La Lopez as saying.

Up popped Lopez's spokesman Alan Nierob. He said that she had never talked to the *NoW* (and never will) and that the quotes were made up. And she isn't engaged, or pregnant. The *Post* accepts all this – which leaves the mystery of how the *Screws*, with its obsession with accuracy and truthfulness, came to get the story so wrong.

HATS OFF to the *Sunday Times* for its commitment to genuine devolution.

"Glasgow has the most polluted city centre in Britain, outstripping emission levels in London, according to new government figures," a shock-horror story in its Scottish edition revealed last Sunday.

The Irish edition carried the same news, but with a slightly different angle: "Belfast is Britain's most polluted city, according to government figures…"

CLICHEWATCH – THE NEOPHILIACS

"GEOMETRIC prints may be the new black for the fashionistas of Paris, but May is the new August for French workers." – Jo Johnson, *Financial Times*, 16 May.

"Busking seems to be the new rock'n'roll." – Richard Morrison, *The Times*, 17 May.

"Sushi – it's the new rock and roll." – Vicki Tagg, *Bristol Evening Post*, 18 May.

"This season's must-have is not the white rivet belt with vintage jeans, it is, in fact, the canary yellow Porsche Boxster S … I'd go as far as to say that the Boxster is the new black." – Lorraine Candy, *The Times*, 19 May.

"In the wake of the huge American success of *The Mummy Returns*, the question has inevitably arisen: why are we so fascinated by mummies? Is it a Freud thing, or a fashion statement – bandages as the new black?" – Cosmo Landesman, *Sunday Times*, 20 May.

"You couldn't call lounge music the new rock'n'roll exactly, but…" – Phil Johnson, *Independent*, 25 May.

"Cricket's mass-marketing is long overdue. The premise that the sport of gentlemen can become the new rock'n'roll is entirely plausible." – Hannah Betts, *The Times*, 4 June.

"SMS is the new black - and just in case you are one of the 30 per cent of the population that do not own a mobile phone, I mean Short Messaging Service, aka text messaging." – Helen Fear, *Daily Express*, 6 June.

"Art…the new rock'n'roll." – Rachel Campbell-Johnston, *The Times*, 12 June.

"The Moldy Peaches fit no one's definition of fashionable, unless children's party entertainment turns out to be the new rock'n'roll…" – Steve Jelbert, *Independent*, 15 June.

"Nigella has made cooking the new sex." – Hadley Freeman, *Guardian*, 22 June.

"The trendsetters were all drinking vodka mixed with fizzy pop or cranberry juice…Cranberry is the new black." – Mick Hume, *The Times*, 23 June.

"Something highly unusual is happening in Japan. It may be overstating it to say that politics is the new rock'n'roll over there, but…" – *Guardian* editorial, 27 June.

"We have a throwaway attitude to everything else, so why not pets?…So too bad for terrapins if they are no longer the new black." – Geraldine Bedell, *Independent*, 28 June.

"If gardening is the new sex then Hampton Court Flower Show must be a major erogenous zone." – Patricia Cleveland-Peck, *Independent on Sunday*, 1 July.

"Being 'off sick' is rapidly becoming the new black. Chris Evans has shot to the top of the VIP Sick List…" – Clive Goodman, *News of the World*, 1 July.

"Domesticity is the new rock and roll. Or, to put it another way, it's in to stay in." – Virginia Backbrun, *Daily Mail*, 5 July.

"Julien Macdonald must have found walking out at the end of his first haute-couture show in Paris yesterday somewhat akin to entering the lions' den…The new black (ie, black) was much in evidence." – Lisa Armstrong, *The Times*, 9 July.

"Nothing in life is black and white. Unless, that is, it you happen to be a dedicated follower of fashion. And this year the new black is... black and white." – *Edinburgh Evening News*, 11 July.

"Socialism for Scotland is the new rock'n'roll." – Angus Calder, *Guardian*, 14 July.

"Food is the new black – but this time it's bread rather than chocolate." – Maggie Pringle, *Sunday Express*, 15 July.

"Staying in seems to be the new going out." – Lee Holmes, *Independent on Sunday*, 15 July.

"Going out is the new going out." – Barometer trends column, *Daily Mail*, 16 July.

"Fashion: Small is the New Big." – *The Times*, 16 July.

LORD HASKINS, described in *The Times* as the government's "red tape czar", announced that he going to "unpick" company law with special reference to "remuneration approval". One problem, he said, was that there are far too many fat cats who do not deserve their vast pay rises. bonuses and share options.

"We cannot have the likes of Railtrack, Marks & Spencer and Marconi happening every week without something being done," said Haskins. Modestly, he did not mention Express Dairies, whose share price has slumped to 28p. The chairman gets £75,000 a year from the failing company. He is, er, Lord Haskins. Nor was there any reference to Northern Foods, where chief executive Joe Stewart saw his "remuneration package" leap last year from £390,897 to £423,053, mainly due to a vast annual bonus of nearly £60,000. That obviously wasn't enough, so Mr Stewart exercised (cashed in) a few of the generous share options he had been awarded - at a gain to himself of £20,253. The non-executive chairman didn't do too badly, either. He got £94,916, which helps to supplement his substantial income from the 1,437,536 shares he holds in the company. Who he? Er, Lord Haskins…

THE ELECTORAL commission, with its statutory powers to regulate business donations to political parties, was widely welcomed as a brake on businessmen buying favours and lobbying politicians.

How strange, then, that one of the commissioners, Glyn Mathias, should also be working part time for a lobbying firm. Former BBC presenter Mathias was appointed to the commission back in January. The home office press release failed to mention that he also works for Westminster Strategy and its subsidiary Strategy Wales. According to the home office statement, Mathias "was recently public affairs manager at Strategy Wales". The home office explained to the *Eye*: "Given the limited information passed on by officials, that was the most prominent post he has had."

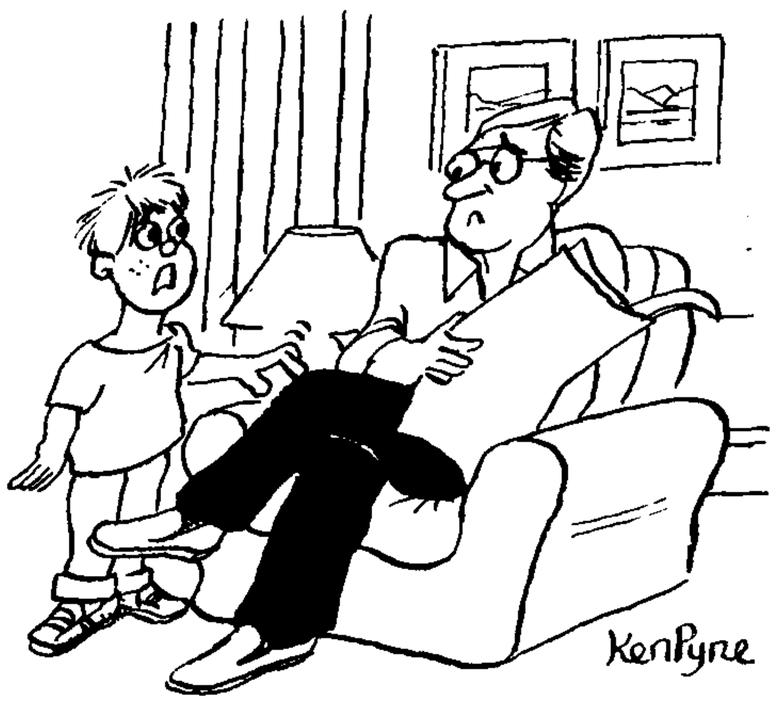
The electoral commission confirm that Mathias still works two days a week for Westminster Strategy and Strategy Wales, but say Mathias "takes great care to ensure there isn't a conflict of interest between his clients and his work for the commission". Current clients include British Energy, BT, South West Water, Swalec, Roche, Aventis, private military contractor Brown & Root, Microsoft and Nissan. Doubtless working with them will give the electoral commissioner unique insights into issues such as party funding, sponsorship and lobbying - all areas it is his job to regulate.

CHINA'S success as an Olympic host in 2008 attracts a storm of criticism over the country's human rights record. But will this controversy be suitably reflected in the Commons?

Commercial interests in China are well represented in Parliament, and China was the second most popular destination for MPs' freebies last year. Eleven (overwhelmingly Labour) MPs went to China in 2000. Ben Chapman (Wirral South), John Cummings (Easington), Ian Davidson (Glasgow Pollok), Stephen Hepburn (Jarrow) and Bill Olner (Nuneaton) went on an 11-day jaunt in March, with the Chinese government picking up the tab for accommodation. The all-party China group paid the airfares, although the MPs on this trip were entirely from the Labour party.

The all-party China group is funded by Alstom and Prudential. Alstom is a French engineering firm which builds nuclear power stations in China, not to mention the controversial Three Gorges dam. Prudential has gone into joint venture with a state financial institution to sell life insurance in the People's Republic. Labour's Clive Efford (Eltham), Andy King (Rugby & Kenilworth) Denis Murphy (Wansbeck) and Tom Pendry (Stalybridge, now retired to the Lords) had two weeks in China last September, courtesy of the Chinese association for international understanding, although they paid their own air fares. Labour's Ian Gibson (Norwich North) and Tory Richard Page (South-West Herts) spent five days on a science tour of China courtesy of the Chinese people's consultative conference and the Parliamentary science committee.

Ben Chapman is chairman of the all-party China group. In 1999 he met president Jiang Zemin to tell him the good news that the group, with 150 members, is the second largest in the Commons – an event prominently reported in the *People's Daily*. In 2000 Chapman attended the AGM of the "48 Group" in the Commons' members dining room. The group is dedicated to "promoting the trade relations with the People's Republic … through the medium of harmonious commercial and financial relationships". At last year's meeting Du Quien, First Minister from the Chinese Embassy "reminded the audience of the enormous potential for British companies as the 'western initiative' opens up this vast area". Chapman is also active on the executive of the Great Britain China Centre, where alongside Edward Heath and a host of bankers he, er, "promotes harmony" between the two nations.



"Dad–who was William Hague?"

LAST December (before the election) a department for trade and industry statement announced that the government were considering new laws to force employers to agree to workers' requests for more flexible working hours after they became parents. This was proof of the importance attached by New Labour to young families.

In June, after the election, the new secretary of state for trade and industry, Patricia Hewitt, announced a new government policy. Out went the right to work flexible hours after having a baby. In came the right to ask your employer if you can work flexible hours after having a baby. On BBC's *Newsnight* Jeremy Paxman asked Ms Hewitt if the new policy meant that workers, when they became parents, had to "get on their knees and beg" employers for more flexible hours. Hewitt responded sharply: "No, no, no Jeremy - that is a caricature."

In fact, the position when Hewitt's proposals are carried out will be as follows: "You don't have a legal right to return to work part-time if you were previously employed full time... You can of course ask to reduce your future hours of work after your baby is born. It is up to your employer whether or not to agree."

That admirable summary is still the law of the land. It was written in a book called *Your Second Baby* by Patricia Hewitt and Wendy Rose-Neil, published by Unwin Hyman - in 1990.

RATTLED by the reaction of Londoners to the government's plan to part privatise the Tube, the officers of the London Labour party decided to meet transport secretary Stephen Byers to make plain their opposition.

Accompanying MPs Ian Coleman, Clive Efford and Karen Buck was thuggish London whip Tony McNulty. As the MPs took Byers on, McNulty did not demur. Rather the opposite – he praised his colleagues for displaying "such candour". But by six that evening McNulty had apparently had second thoughts. Scouring the tea rooms for on-message colleagues, he had them all in place by the time the London Labour group met in a Commons committee room. McNulty, now bolstered by the arrival of press-ganged colleagues, immediately demanded that officers "withdraw their statement of opposition" to the public / private partnership plan.

LABOUR peer Lord Stoddart faces losing the party whip in the House of Lords for sending a letter of support – and a small donation – to Neil Thompson, the former St Helen's Labour councillor, who stood for the Socialist Alliance against Shaun Woodward in the general election.

In his letter to Thompson, Stoddart wrote: "You and other members of the Labour Party (of which I have been a member for 53 years and served as a rank and filer, as well as council leader, MP, government whip and peer) are entitled to feel aggrieved at the last minute parachuting in on Shaun Woodward. As it is, the people of St Helen's cannot be certain that, if things go badly wrong for the Labour party in future, he will not re-rat."

Stoddart has received a letter from government chief whip, Denis Carter: "I am considering suspending you from the Labour whip. If you have any representations to make, I will consider them." Stoddart will shortly face the firing squad in the shape of Labour's NEC disputes committee. Forming part of the star chamber set-up to interrogate Stoddart is yoof representative Blair MacDougall, who was elected to his post earlier in the year amid loud accusations of ballot rigging.

LEGAL NEWS

STOMACH-CHURNING document of the year must surely be "Rewarding Excellence", produced by the *Lawyer* magazine, in which are announced no fewer than 25 "awards" for excellence in the legal profession.

The announcements are accompanied by endless cliche-ridden citations about the wonderful jobs done by almost all the big solicitors firms in the City. South African born barrister Sir Sidney Kentridge got a "lifetime achievement award" and a piece of shameless arslikhan from Lord Chancellor Irvine, who hired Sir Sidney to appeal against a unanimous tribunal finding that he (the Lord Chancellor) had been guilty of sex discrimination when he appointed his buddy Garry Hart (of City solicitors Herbert Smith) as his paid adviser. (Kentridge won the appeal 2-1for the grateful Lord Chancellor, but the case has gone on to the House of Lords.)

Another good example was the contest for "litigation team of the year", in which 13 lucky lawyers from the monumentally expensive City firm Richards Butler had themselves photographed to illustrate their triumph. The citation explained: "The team managed to obtain a mandatory interlocutory injunction from an English court that tapes of an Australian soap *Home and Away* be delivered for transmission in Ireland. It is this impressive and sure-footed lawyering across a broad range of media cases which wins the award." After impressive and sure-footed language like that it was obviously inappropriate to point out that although the aforesaid injunction was indeed won in an English court, Richards Butler also sued two other defendants in the same case. Both cases collapsed, and the judge ordered the clients of the sure-footed litigation team of the year to cough up costs believed to be not a million pounds less than £75,000.

TV

Space (BBC1)

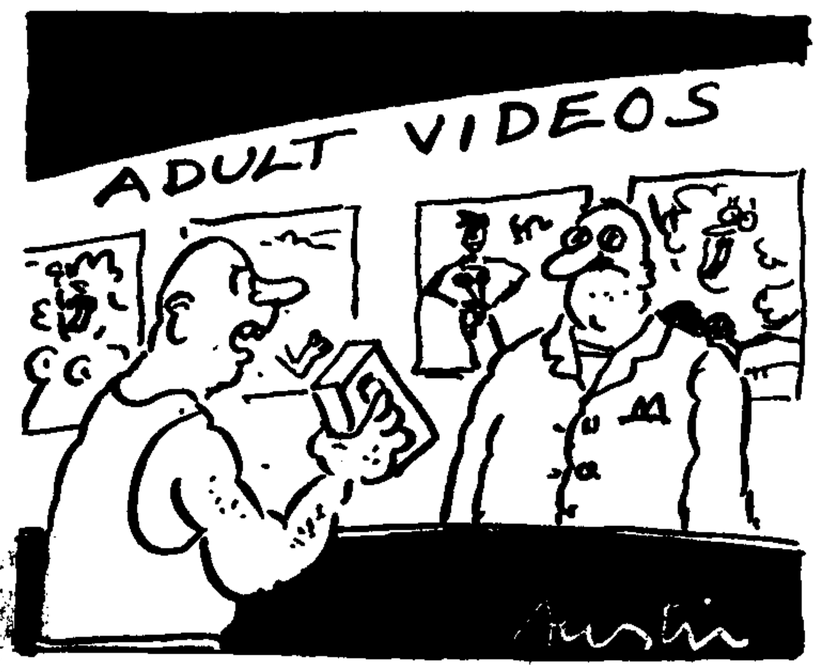
ONE of the reasons that university common rooms are such bitchy places is the post-1960s phenomenon of the TV don. The academic hacks writing research papers on their mere university salaries resent colleagues who double their income with television fees and also draw more students to their lectures because their faces are recognisable. Some of the envy is pre-emptive: in each major university department, teachers sense the one among their number who is destined to become a 10-part series with accompanying book.

Well, happiness can return to the campus because the age of the TV don is over. Whereas previous television series on the origins of the universe have been presented by astronomer Carl Sagan (*Cosmos*) and Professor Stephen Hawking, BBC1's *Space* is fronted by the actor Sam Neill, whose qualifications seem to be that he played a scientist in the Australian space race movie *The Dish* and also wore a white coat in *Jurassic Park* and *Jurassic Park III*. Neill may be easier to understand than Hawking, but isn't it a possible problem that he doesn't himself understand anything he's saying?

What, on earth, made Neill think he could do this? There's a clue in the opening episode, in which the actor repeats several times with wonder the fact that everything which makes us up started inside a star. This is astrophysics at the level a luvvie can comprehend: "Sam, you went out there a star and you came back as an actor."

But this is the new TV. A genuine pointy-head might make viewers feel inferior or fear that the series was going to be difficult. An actor is a friendly guide who, anyway, must have picked up something from the thematically related dialogue he once delivered. And so the BBC's next history of English literature will presumably be presented not by Professor Kermode but by Joseph Fiennes, who played Shakespeare on film. Meanwhile, the 16-part History Of Religion will be hosted by Richard Chamberlain, who, after all, played a Catholic priest in *The Thorn Birds*.

Apart from the publicity provoked by Neill, the series has been heavily sold on its visual power, making use of a computer-generated Virtual Space Zone in the mountains of New Zealand, which is where Neill started life after he had been a star, But as with the clear ancestor of this science as entertainment series – BBC1's *Walking With Dinosaurs* – Space shows the risk of new technology in factual programming.



"I want to complain about
Amanda Platell Reveals All"

Computer simulations don't look like simulations. Although Neill occasionally slips in a phrase such as "if this theory is correct", there is a constant suggestion that we are seeing what the birth of the universe or the death of a supernova really look like. Graphic technology gives hypothesis the solidity of fact. Just as the dinosaur series gave the impression that scientists actually knew what a T-Rex did between breakfast and lunch, so *Space* gives an exaggerated reality to theories about life coming to earth off the back of a comet.

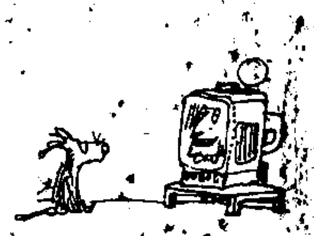
And, exaggerating the how, the series completely ignores the why. No one's asking for the Reverend Billy Graham as a pundit, but *Space* never even acknowledges the problem of first cause. "First there was nothing!", shouts Neill. "And then there was an explosion of gases called The Big Bang!" This is the scientific equivalent of religious fundamentalism – just believe me that these things are so – but a series scheduled early enough for schoolchildren to see it should at least touch on the mystery of how an explosion can occur in nothingness.

But, with a show aimed at sales to the US, it's safer not even to take on these questions. Let Middle America think that God was the gas-man if they want to. In fact, the closest it comes to grappling with theology is the first programme's obsession with our origins in space: a central tenet of Scientology. You start to wonder if Sam Neill has been sitting next to John Travolta at a Hollywood dinner.

Mainly, though, *Space* is just silly. Declaring yet again that we all come from space, the actor who twice played a scientist announces that "we are all aliens", while a graphics trick squashes his face and eyes into the look of ET. Phone home, Lord Reith. Phone home.

'Square Eyes'

MEDIA NEWS



ONE OF THE highlights of the Amnesty International annual media awards bash is often provided by foghorn-voiced ex-*Observer* hack John Sweeney, who after failing to win an award for which he has been nominated proceeds to get tired and emotional and tell anyone in earshot why he deserved it all along.

This year, in an unprecedented turn of events, Sweeney actually won something – the radio prize for his Radio 5 Live interviews with Chechen victims of torture. In his speech, Sweeney decided to give his fledgling television career a boost by telling an embarrassing story about ITN elder statesman Julian Manyon. He told how foreign hacks sent to report on the elections in former Yugoslavia were detained on arrival at Belgrade airport. Manyon grew so irate, according to Sweeney, that he marched up to an official-looking type and demanded: "Do you know who I am?" The "official" turned out to be a very unimpressed Russian foreign minister.

Some chuckled, but for many the story fell flat. Firstly because Manyon – for whom Sweeney worked as a junior and very obsequious researcher many years ago – was not there to defend himself, and secondly because Sweeney had described Belgrade airport as "torture" – perhaps not the most witty description given the occasion.

Meanwhile, the foul-mouthed Sweeney's arrival as BBC Radio 5's "investigator at large" has upset the gentle souls who work at White City. Events came to a head last week during a telephone conversation with Roger Alton, Sweeney's former editor at the *Obs*. The five-minute call contained 27 "f" words and a similar number of "c" words. Shocked staff in the neighbouring *Money Box* office complained about "both the content and the volume" of the conversation.

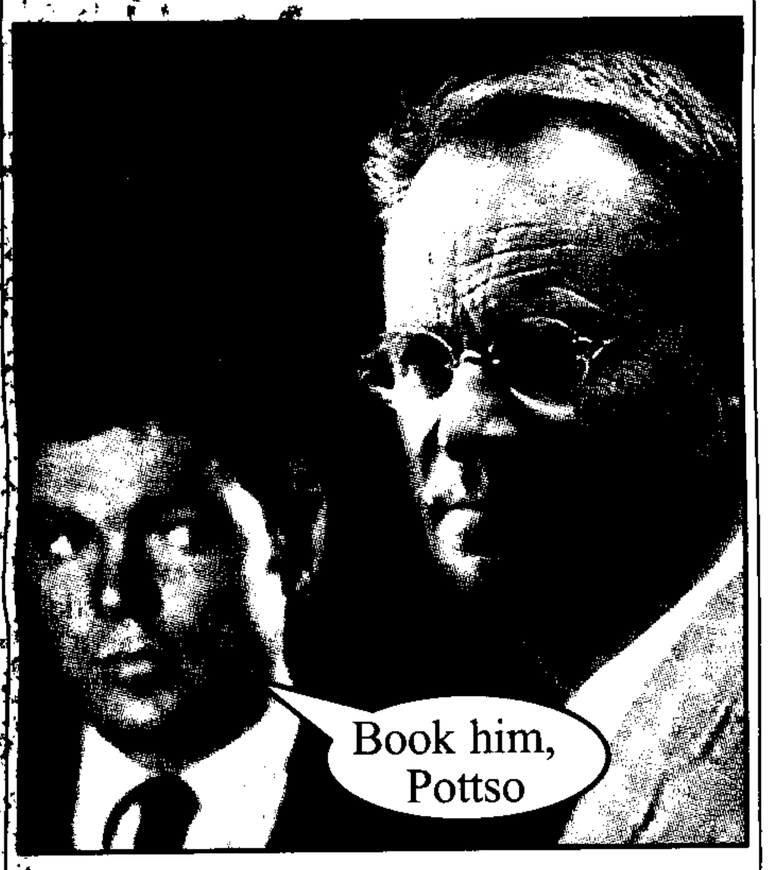
Sweeney, however, was unrepentant. "It's the only language Roger understands," he explains.

IN THE JOKE pages of *Eye* 1031 we featured *Chalk and Cheese*, an imaginary new BBC1 crime series going out on Monday nights. "Dave Chalk is an old-style maverick copper who likes to break the rules, whereas Sally Cheese is a play-it-by-the-book fast-track graduate [who] has to balance new baby with life in the elite NR7 squad. Can Chalk and Cheese resolve their differences?"

As ever, reality outpaces satire. The *Radio Times* for 14-20 July carried a prominent feature on *Mersey Beat*, a new BBC-1 crime series going out on Monday nights. "Supt Susan Blake (Haydn Gwynne): just back from maternity leave, Supt Blake leads the team. She's balancing work and home life. Insp Jim Oulton (John McArdle): Blake's right-hand man, respected by management and officers, but at home he has financial worries. He's a tough working-class lad from Liverpool, she's a middle-class graduate, but as it happens they rather respect each other..."

SPLIT personalities

Bob Moore



Jack Lord Archer

A CURIOUS bulletin from Liz Smith, veteran gossip columnist on the Murdoch-owned *New York Post*, who is used by her employer to announce to the world such vital events as his wedding and imminent parenthood.

In her column two weeks ago, Smith admitted to reading a rival publication – the *New York Times*. "We all make mistakes," she wrote, "but in the Sunday *Times* magazine's big wet kiss for Roger Ailes and the Fox News Channel, they estimated the worth of this Rupert Murdoch-owned phenomenon at $3bn. Isn't $4.2bn more like it? The *Times* was only $1.2bn off, but who's counting?"

Well, Rupert, probably, followed closely by his bankers and increasingly worried debenture and stock holders. But Smith's correction of the *Times*'s alleged "mistake" reveals News Corp's sensitivity towards any suggestion that it's running short of money. Could it be, by any chance, that Rupert's divorce settlement, together with the costs of digital TV and global downturns in circulation and advertising, have combined to create an impending financial crisis for the septuagenarian father-to-be?

LACHLAN MURDOCH'S attempts to impress his dad have taken another blow down under. His failed internet venture One.Tel is now in liquidation, with Lachlan and partner James Packer (son of Kerry) having lost £350m between them over the past two years trying to bail out the doomed dotcom.

Lachie and Jimbo claim they were "profoundly misled" by their fellow-directors Jodee Rich and Brad Keeling: why else, as recently as March, would they have confidently reassured shareholders and prospective investors that One.Tel could be turned round? But the Australian securities and investments commission (ASIC) has its suspicions about this defence, and its questions may soon have to be answered by Lachie in person. Indeed he could even find himself in court: last week the administrators appointed to wind up One.Tel suggested that unpaid creditors "might have a case" to sue the board (including Murdoch jnr and Packer jnr) for insolvent trading. They also say that One.Tel's pre-paid advertising booking, worth about £40m, will have to be paid by someone.

A trip to Sydney to face the ASIC inquiry is not something that Murdoch jnr will enjoy. His gelled-up haircut may have earned him a "sexiest man in Australia" gong from a lifestyle rag, but his professional reputation is sinking fast – especially since a humiliating defeat at Australia's federal court earlier this month. The judges decided that the South Sydney rugby club, an old-fashioned bastion of working-class Aussie battlers which was dropped at Lachlan's behest from the National Rugby League competition last year, has to be reinstated next season. Media rival Kerry Stokes has gleefully jumped in with a promise to sponsor the club.

Murdoch, who owns half the NRL through his Foxtel pay TV outfit (another famous loss-maker in the News Ltd collection), has wisely decided not to appeal. By now even Lachlan must be realising the truth apparent to everyone else: that his stint as chairman of Digger Deng's Australian interests proves his unfitness to run the world operation.

Kerry Packer has certainly got the message: describing the One.Tel debacle as "a fuck-up", he announced last week that he was assuming control of operations in Australia and sending son James on holiday. Will Rupert soon be tempted to relieve Lachie of his onerous managerial duties too?

PS: "I hear from Australia that James Packer, son of mega-billionaire Kerry, hasn't been seen around the family sheep station much since the collapse of One.Tel, the Aussie telecoms company where he was a driving force," reports Martin Waller, City diarist of *The Times*. "Gossips say he's holed up in London…" How wise to omit any mention of young Jimbo's partner-in-disaster – whose dad just happens to be Waller's boss.

AD NAUSEAM

IF ANYONE from car manufacturer Peugeot is reading, here's a plea: please, please make it stop. Another car launch brings another stomach-churning ad campaign and the nation begs for mercy from this barbarous French oppressor, bludgeoning honest British brains to mush with its trademark line in bleeding-heart branding.

Peugeot reckon flattery is the best form of attrition. Their new spot for the 307 is a slow-mo schmaltz-fest of a prisoner doing a mural (caption: "A prisoner is not just a criminal"), men snogging women as a baby looks on ("A husband is not just a father") and a car – the 307 – that is a number ("A car is not just a number"). In the background there plays a popped-up Negro-spiritual, "Something inside so strong". The whole thing's shot with that greyed grim realism filter. And the message, if it needs exposition, is that people who drive Peugeots are free spirits, be they convicts, lovers or indeed bog-standard Mondeo-men (in Peugeots).

Given that the humble nipple is the mainstay of French advertising, it is conceivable that across the Channel they are less familiar with the touchy-feely sales push – and thus this kind of emotional blackmail might seem less preposterous to them. Except that this ad hails from London's Euro RSCG Wnek Gosper. And they've been ploughing the mawkish furrow on Peugeot's behalf for several years now, ever since the 406 launched with men in suits snatching young children from certain horrible death to the sounds of M-People's "Search for the Hero".

Such gnomic bunkum – effectively telling Mr Average he's Mother Teresa in slacks if he buys the right car – is, of course, the very stuff of automobile advertising, a strange world of acronyms and airbags in which men smile contentedly as they accelerate out of hairpins in the Highlands, outrun tornados or dissect acres of arable at impossible speed with no other car to be seen for miles. Right now, a Volvo will "Revolvolutionise your life", a Peugeot is "the drive of your life", a Vauxhall "handles life beautifully", whereas in a Honda Civic you simply "live it."

Perhaps if the car-makers' endless fancy film-shorts bore some resemblance to what you might call "real life", the bemused motorist might at last have a reason to go shopping.

POETRY CORNER

CHIEF Fire Officer Malcolm Saunders – poet, ex-Marxist and Ruskin graduate – so antagonised his Merseyside Fire Brigade members by his arrogant management style that more than 82 per cent of them voted for last week's all-out strike.

The dispute, which saw the nostalgic return of army Green Goddesses to the streets, was caused by Saunders' decision – taken without any consultation – to go ahead with the appointment of people from outside the brigade to senior uniformed management posts, despite a national employers' ruling against this.

Saunders claims he acted in the interests of political correctness. He says senior managers in the fire service are 100 percent white males and it would take too long to redress the imbalance by promoting women and ethnic minorities through the ranks.

By an amazing coincidence, one of the two contentious new appointments to station officer made so far, Donna Campbell, is the girlfriend of assistant CFO David Burns – Saunders's second-in command. Burns sat at the back of a practice session for assessing management applicants the day before Campbell was up for the job. It is assumed that he exercised his professional discretion and refrained from coaching her on the questions she would be likely to be asked at the interview.

The few uniformed women fire officers actually in the brigade are strangely antipathetic to their PC chief – "makes my flesh creep" said one. This may partly stem from a poem he published on the internet concerning the murder of a prostitute:

Blind with rage he grabs his knife
He screams that she will lose her life
And lunges viciously
Cutting and searing…

Another extract, from a poem entitled "Stallion", is equally, er, powerful stuff:

He drew the equine female scent
And stamped in powerful lust
With thundering hooves he circled round
To mate with mighty thrust.

Saunders' "Odes from the Chief" in fact became enormously popular among Merseyside's firefighters, who had previously not been noted for their interest in poetry. Alas, the Chief has since closed down his website. Too, too modest.

SUPERMODELS

KERBER

DARLING I'M BURNING, WOULD YOU PUT SOME OF THAT HIGH FACTOR CREAM ON MY BUM?
YEAH… WHERE IS IT?
IT'S THAT BIT JUST BELOW MY BACK!
NOPE, STILL CAN'T SEE IT!

DOING THE ROUNDS
BRISTOL INQUIRY SPECIAL

Patients? What patients?

"THERE are no winners in Bristol. We are all losers." So said charity director and parent Maria Shortis when the report was finally published last week.

Some of those outside the hospital who ignored the *Eye*'s dire and repeated warnings about the poor results for child heart surgery in 1992 were singled out for criticism: Peter Doyle from the department of health, Sir Terence English from the royal college of surgeons and Dr Norman Halliday from the supra-regional advisory group. MD managed to escape censure for not airing his concerns through "the proper channels" (rather than the *Eye*) because the channels simply didn't exist. When it came to protecting babies from obvious harm, the DoH, GMC, royal colleges, district health authority, regional health authority and NHS executive were as useful as a bedouin in a bobsleigh. And probably still are.

But perhaps the biggest losers in Ian Kennedy's 500-page tome are the surviving children left permanently brain-damaged by heart surgery. As no unit in the country has kept reliable data on morbidity (damage short of death), Kennedy was not able to offer any judgement as to whether this was excessive in Bristol compared to an average unit over the 11 years under study. These children have already been forgotten once, by the earlier GMC inquiry, and are offensively recorded in the hospital statistics as "successes" because they were still alive 30 days post-operation.

There are at least 30 such children who need constant care and whose parents face a living hell. Many have a normal life expectancy but, because proving clinical negligence is so difficult, may never receive compensation unless health secretary Alan Milburn acts swiftly on Kennedy's suggestion to end clinical negligence and introduces retrospective no-blame compensation as a gesture of goodwill. However, ditching negligence litigation before proper mechanisms of accountability are in place in the NHS (which they clearly aren't), could make it harder to uncover other Bristol-type disasters. Were it not for the tenacity of lawyers such as Laurence Vick in the Bristol case, the trust may never have handed over the surgeons' log books that helped prove the care was so inadequate.

Another loser in Bristol is the courageous paediatric heart surgeon Ash Pawade, who took over in 1995 when the disgraced surgeons Wisheart and Dhasmana finally threw in the scalpel. Very few, if any, other heart surgeons would have entered such a stressful environment. And yet immediately his expertise shone through, despite suffering the same substandard working conditions and split sites as the previous incumbents. While they lost nine out of 13 babies to the switch operation, he and his colleagues have now performed the operation more than 70 times without a single fatality.

The reward for such incredible results should surely be a top merit award, particularly since Wisheart retired with the top A+ grade for "services to the profession" (*sic*). Yet despite the promises of health secretaries Dobson and Milburn that these archaic awards would be overhauled to ensure the money goes to those who best serve patients, Pawade has been repeatedly overlooked, as was the equally gifted adult surgeon Gianni Angelini. Both have done more than any to put heart surgery back on the map in Bristol but both, like whistleblower Steve Bolsin before them, are "outsiders". Clearly the club culture is alive and kicking in Bristol and they aren't in it.

Outside Bristol, which was rightly praised by Kennedy for publishing its results, the other 12 heart surgery units were also losers for failing to take the opportunity to demonstrate their competence to the public. British paediatric cardiac association president Bob Anderson deserves credit for persuading all the units to at least collect data for the year up to April 2001, which has apparently found that there are no statistically significant poor performers and the overall results are as good as any in the world. However, he wasn't able to release the audit into the public domain because the units hadn't all agreed to it. So we just have to take it on blind trust again. Surely if the information is good enough to reassure us that child heart surgery disasters are no longer occurring, it's good enough for individual units to publish?

Whether Kennedy's well-reasoned but rather obvious report ends up as a milestone or a millstone for the NHS remains to be seen. Its long delay was because he was trying to shoe-horn his 198 recommendations into the plethora of new NHS bodies and frameworks that New Labour have already introduced. But the very fact that - until two weeks ago - he could find nothing in the government or profession's six-year efforts to prevent another Bristol is deeply disturbing.

The NHS needs a single truly independent medical inspectorate with a presence in every region to ensure scrutiny and accountability, but instead seems to be lumbered with at least nine poorly defined acronyms. NHS trusts need the resources to prove their competence directly to patients, rather than spending all day catering to the demands of CHI, NICE, PALS, NPSA, NCAA, CQH, NHSMA, NHSLC or CHR.

As the vindicated whistleblower Steve Bolsin observed: "If you want to stop another Bristol, you should never lose sight of the patient." Alas, Controller Milburn already has.

M.D.

JUST FANCY THAT!

"The Baker report covering the GP's clinical practice between 1974 and 1998 found that Shipman had an excess of 297 deaths compared with other doctors... Shipman gave the mostly elderly women lethal doses of diamorphine, the medical term for heroin."

– *Guardian*, 25 January 2001

"Pure heroin, as Nick Davies argued with such clinical precision here and on TV... causes no physical or psychological side effects at all."

– *Guardian*, 19 July 2001

From the 'Captain Scarlet Annual', 1968

DOWN ON THE FARM

EARLY in the morning of Sunday 13 May, the villagers of Knowstone, Devon, were surprised to hear the sound of rifle shots. When they ran out of their houses to see what was going on, they saw a crowd of men in white and blue overalls running around, blazing away with rifles at a herd of Limousin cattle in a local farmer's fields.

As one animal after another fell to the ground, dozens of those still alive went berserk, desperately trying to escape from the killing ground, even tearing their way through thick hedges reinforced by up to six strands of barbed wire. One neighbour was astonished to see 19 cattle scramble through a hedge onto his farm, sweating in fear, their tongues lolling out, with blood pouring from wounds all over their bodies. He said he had never seen such looks of terror on any animals in his life.

Thus began a nightmare which over the following four weeks was to convince the villagers of Knowstone that they were living in a police state. It took the Maffia and the Army two days to complete the killing of the original Limousin herd, which had been diagnosed as having foot-and-mouth. Some bullocks had even tried to hide in nearby woods. But the officials then began working round the village, killing the animals on one farm after another under their so-called "contiguous cull" policy.

In June Mr and Mrs Winslade, in their seventies, were shattered when the Maffia informed them it was about to kill their prized and healthy Charolais cattle. When they suggested challenging the ministry's legal right to destroy the organically-accredited herd which had been their life's work, they were threatened with arrest and told that, if they went to court, they could find themselves having to pay Maff £30,000 in legal costs. The Winslades barricaded their gates and, supported by neighbours including a former high sheriff of Devon, mounted guard to prevent the Maffia gaining access. At five in the morning, supported by two dozen policemen in full riot gear, the slaughter team arrived to force entry. Mrs Winslade was by now so ill with the strain of their ordeal that her husband wearily gave way.

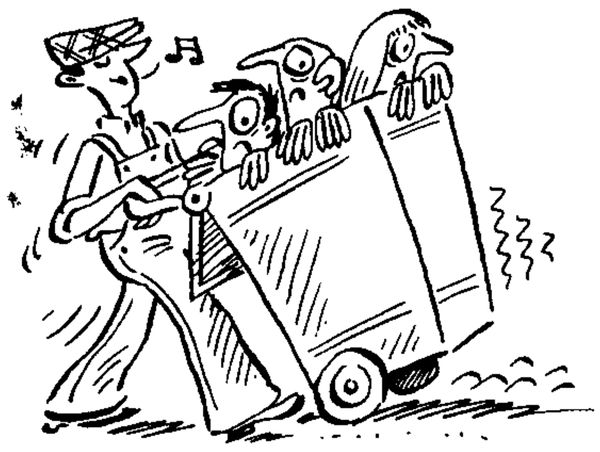
When Maff officials came to tell Stephen Phillips that they were about to shoot seven healthy merino sheep belonging to his wife Lindy, their timing was impeccable. Lindy, in her forties, had died of cancer only two days before. The vets told Mr Phillips they could not even allow his dead wife to be removed from the house, and her funeral would have to be postponed. But this provoked such a storm of media coverage that for once the Maffia retreated.

Almost everything Maff got up to around Knowstone in those four weeks between mid-May and mid-June was illegal. From the original massacre of those Limousin cattle, conducted in clear breach of the animal welfare regulations 1994, the criminal law was broken hundreds of times. The contiguous cull policy itself, under which millions of healthy animals have been slaughtered since March, has no legal authorisation under the animal health act 1981, which only permits the killing of animals which are diseased or which pose a risk of infection.

It is hardly surprising that Tony Blair has confirmed he has no intention of allowing any independent inquiry into this catastrophe, since such an investigation could only conclude that his government has been responsible for more criminal acts than any in history.

'Even Newer Muckspreader'

ROTTEN BOROUGHS



SQUEALING IN EALING

HUNDREDS of oldies in Ealing have been shocked to receive huge bills from the council for "home care" services such as help with housework and "personal care". The bills – the highest is £13,000 but most are in the hundreds – date back up to two years and have left many pensioners confused and fearful.

They come from a social services department which was described as "incompetent beyond belief" by department of health inspectors in 1997 but which had recently boasted of a "change of culture" which resulted in the Labour council being named "social services team of the year" at the *Local Government Chronicle* awards in March.

Means-tested charging for home care was introduced in 1996. Weekly and monthly payment schemes are in place to prevent "clients" falling behind with their bills. Alas this is exactly what has happened in more than 350 cases - and frail, elderly people are now receiving monthly itemised credit card-style bills for hundreds of pounds which they have not got. Currently there is a hole of more than £1.4m in Ealing's social services budget because of the arrears.

Ealing council's spokesman tells the *Eye*: "The system is in line with department of health guidelines across the country. We cannot stop providing these services. Monthly accounts should help people by reminding them how much they owe. Obviously there is an element of trial and error." Obviously.

OLD BAILEYS

SEASIDE landlady Eileen Hennessy got a taste of how they do things in Doncaster during the Unison conference in Brighton last month. Late in the evening of 17 June she heard a loud thud in the lounge of her Bedford Sands Hotel. As she reached the lounge door a female guest pushed her aside and said "I am going to bed now", followed by two men and another woman. The tired foursome were Doncaster council Unison reps Frank Perks (see *Eye* 1020) and Freddie Edwards and their spouses.

On investigation, Mrs Hennessy discovered that a litre-and-a-half of Bailey's was missing and that a vase, absent from its usual place on the mantelpiece, had been used in an attempt to decant the contents of the Jack Daniel's optic in the adjoining bar. A chair had been used to stretch over the bar and the person purloining the booze had slipped, dropping vase and contents. This had been the noise that alerted the landlady.

In the morning, she gave the quartet their full English breakfast, then their marching orders. No apology was forthcoming, nor was any attempt made to pay for the damage or the missing booze.

Mrs Hennessy has now claimed her evicted guests' £500 unpaid bill from the Doncaster Unison branch. Both Perks and Edwards were attending the union conference on council time. No doubt both the Beacon of Sleaze and Unison regional officials will be mounting a rigorous enquiry.

● **M'LEARNED friends attending the Bloody Sunday inquiry in Derry – bill so far £50m, with another two years and £100m to go – should find their task a little less stressful when the hearings resume in September. By then the number of annoying beggars and boozers hanging around the doors of the city's Guildhall should be considerably reduced, thanks to the thoughtful action of Derry city council in setting up a drop-in centre for the unfortunates – the drinkers, that is, not the lawyers – where they can watch TV, take a shower, get a meal and receive counselling during daylight hours. Protests from alcohol workers that it was perhaps not the brightest idea to site the centre above an off-licence have fallen on deaf ears.**

MARKET FORCES

AFTER the *Eye*'s story about how the former Delyn borough council's permission for a new Saturday market at Holywell on Deeside was obtained with the aid of a forged letter from the local chamber of commerce (issue 1030), concerned councillors in Flintshire (the successor to Delyn and Clywd councils) demanded an explanation. Assistant county secretary Mr P. J. Evans told them: "*Private Eye* is not intended to be taken seriously and it succeeds in this intention."

Let's hope that Mr Evans and other senior council officers such as chief executive Phillip McGreevy and legal boss Andrew Loveridge still see the funny side when legal actions from traders whose businesses were ruined by the pedestrianisation which followed the illegal traffic order start to roll in. Former pet shop owner Marlene Jordan will soon be suing for unlawful interference with business, as will several other traders affected by the order. The final bill could be in the millions.

● **TORY Calderdale council in West Yorkshire commendably decided to ask the people which new system they wanted under proposals for local government reform. They spent £45,000 on the largest consultation exercise ever carried out by the council, in which a respectable 7,000 voted. More than 57 per cent said they wanted an elected mayor. Hats off, then, to Tory council leader "Listening John" Ford, who said the result could be safely ignored because the people of Calderdale had obviously not understood what they were voting for.**

TAKE A BATH

THERE'S a scramble underway for senior officers to cover their backs in advance of the publication of a district auditor's report which is expected to lambast the way Bath and North Somerset council (Banes) handled the transfer of 10,000 council properties worth some £80m to the Somer community housing trust in May 1999.

The council has commissioned a report from expensive City solicitors Eversheds into whether the council can (retrospectively!) indemnify officers such as chief executive John Everitt, city solicitor Vernon Hitchman and resources director Jean Hinks against any finding that the council acted illegally in the way it conducted ballots prior to the sell-off.

The auditor's report is expected to find that leaflets issued by the council were designed to persuade tenants to vote for the transfer, rather than simply informing them of their options. There are also questions over whether land was sold for its full value.

The Bath report could prove a nightmare for councils throughout Britain, which spent millions in the late 1990s persuading tenants to vote in favour of council house sales – not to mention those ministers who cheered them on: John Prescott, Nick Raynsford and Hilary Armstrong.

High Principals

THREE YEARS AGO the *Eye* first told of the treatment meted out to Michael Laidler, then head of the psychology department at New College, Durham.

Laidler fell foul of the college authorities after he refused to give up his right to a trade union contract of employment. *Eye* 959 recounted how his office was demolished while he was lecturing and his belongings, including academic papers, were dumped in a corridor. Following the incident Laidler suffered a nervous breakdown. He contemplated suicide and was forced to give up work.

In April 2000 (see *Eye* 1000), Laidler's representative, Chris Close, discovered documents which made it clear that the then finance director of New College, Sue Curry, believed that Laidler had been mistreated. She threatened to go public unless the college desisted from threatening *her* with redundancy after she had complained that the college's tendering process was open to abuse.

Subsequently, Laidler took New College to the High Court in an attempt to obtain damages for the loss of his job and the ensuing mental anguish. In January this year his case was heard in a five-day trial at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, where Judge Christopher Walton dismissed Laidler's claim for damages and ordered costs of £60,000 against him.

An attempt to take the matter to the Court of Appeal was rebuffed on the grounds that his application was out of time - despite the fact that Laidler possesses a date-stamped letter proving that it was received within the 14-day deadline. Unemployed and facing bankruptcy, Laidler contacted the Lord Chancellor's department for advice and information. The only response was a letter from the court service in London, advising him to take the matter up with Strasbourg.

Laidler's wife Edith wrote to Tony Blair explaining the injustices that her husband has endured at the hands of New College and the courts. Blair wrote back to say he will see to it that the Lord Chancellor's office gives the matter the attention it merits. Whether this is to be yet another false dawn in Laidler's quest for justice remains to be seen.

IT'S GRIM UP NORTH LONDON

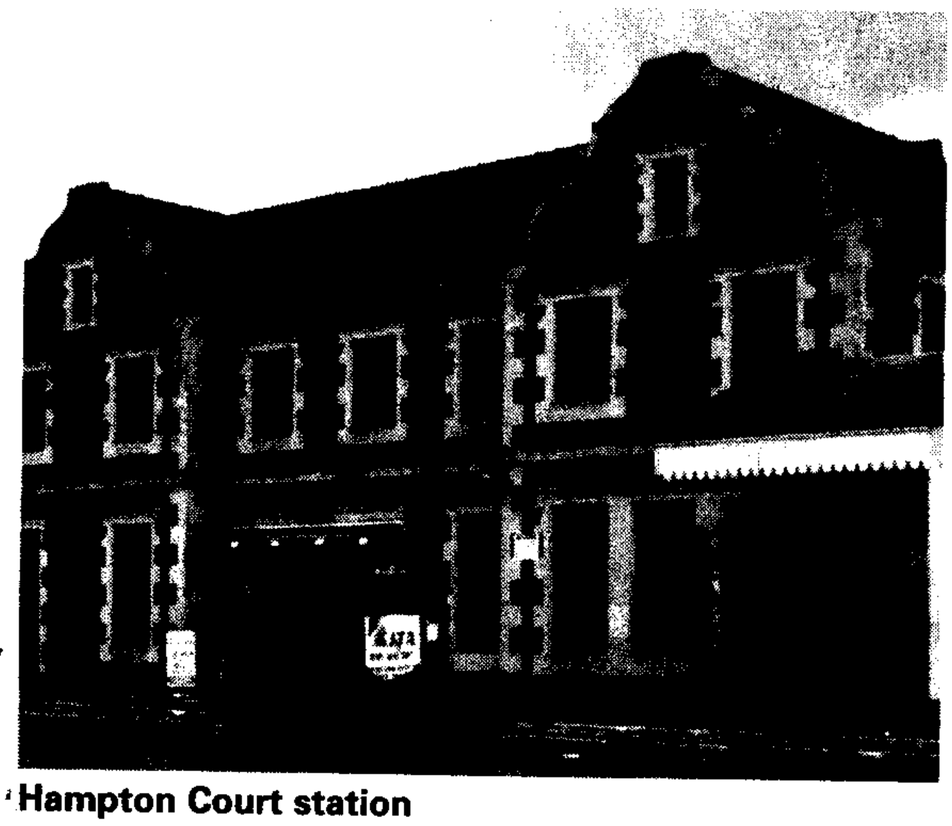
KNIFE & PACKER

ONE OF THE GREAT THINGS ABOUT GOING ON HOLIDAY IS SAVOURING THE AMAZING ARCHITECTURE
I'VE JUST GOT TO GET THIS ON FILM!!
LUTON HAS SOME OF THE MOST AUDACIOUS TERMINALS IN WESTERN EUROPE...

NOOKS and CORNERS

MANY of the scandals that pop up in this column concern buildings that are not particularly well-known outside their localities. We tend to assume that Britain's world-famous monuments must be safe, so protected and so respected that nobody would dare meddle with them: places such as Holyrood Palace, Somerset House, Hampton Court. And we would be wrong.

Every year some 650,000 visitors come from all over the world to see Hampton Court, the great Tudor palace by the Thames, built by Cardinal Wolsey and Henry VIII and subsequently enlarged by Sir Christopher Wren for William and Mary. Many arrive by train from central London. What do they see when they leave the station? An enchanting prospect of red chimneys, turrets and gilded finials rising above green grass and trees? Er, no. Once they have negotiated their way through the neglected and semi-derelict Victorian station building, they find hoardings blocking the view across the Thames, covered in graffiti. Further graffiti and decay enhance the bridge across the river to the palace, a structure designed to harmonise with Wren by the great Edwin Lutyens, but never completed.



Hampton Court station

What is the response of the local authority, Elmbridge, and of the Historic Royal Palaces, who run Hampton Court, to this disgraceful state of affairs? Why, to connive with Railtrack and Messrs Whitbread to build a "small, high quality hotel" on the crucial site on the south bank of the Thames, enhanced by further commercial development.

This site, between the station and the river, was occupied by the single-storey Jolly Boatman pub until some 15 years ago. The pub should never have been built, of course, in such a sensitive location. Originally, the London & South-Western Railway built a handsome neo-Tudor station by the Thames – designed by William Tite, architect of the Royal Exchange – to serve the Palace and to allow visitors to enjoy the noble prospect across the river when they arrived. This vision is not shared by Railtrack, which even proposes cutting back the railway to enable more of its land to be developed with shops. Who cares that passengers will be inconvenienced and have to walk further? Who cares that the landscape setting of one of the most glorious buildings in Britain will be spoiled if money can be made?

What ought to happen is obvious. *Pro bono publico*, the Jolly Boatman site should be cleared and returned to natural parkland. That would be a magnanimous gesture by Whitbread and Railtrack – the latter, after all, ought to be desperate to act in the public interest for once. And then Tite's station building should be restored and Lutyens' lovely bridge cleaned up and given the flanking pavilions that he intended. This is what English Heritage, the Garden History Society, the local MP and many others have long been asking for.

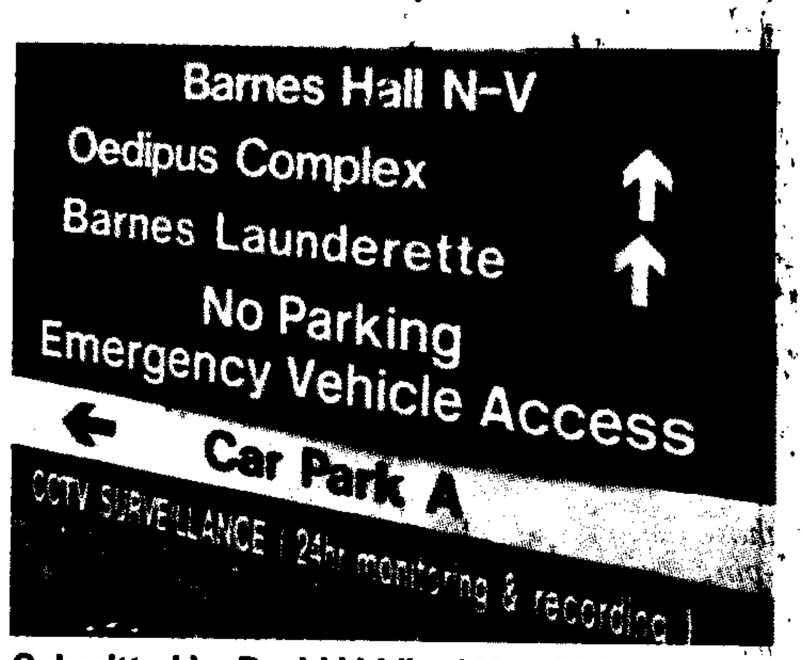
But not, oddly enough, the Historic Royal Palaces: at least, not any more. This gilded agency (whose Royal Charter states that its task is "to administer, conserve, renovate, repair, maintain and improve the palaces to a high standard consistent with their status as buildings of royal, historic and architectural importance") has performed a *volte-face*. Back in 1999, HRP opposed the principle of development on the opposite side of the Thames from the Tudor palace and argued for the restoration of the historic vistas. But now, instead of working closely with Elmbridge council to achieve this, HRP seems happy with the notion of a commercial development way beyond the small restaurant originally proposed. At least, this is the attitude of one Bob Hill, consultant to HRP and director for the Tower [of London] Environs Scheme. "We take the view that opposition to any form of development will not produce improvement," he once stated. "We don't think it something we can sensibly sustain."

Oddly enough, Mr Hill was once a director of Railtrack.

BAD NEWS: the brutes of Blaenau Gwent council have ignored public opinion and have been demolishing the magnificent domes of the Brynmawr Rubber Factory (Eyes passim ad nauseam). This is a crime which will not be forgotten, or forgiven...

'Piloti'

I-SPY *Keele University*



Submitted by David Liddle. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

CHURCH NEWS

THE GOOD folk of Medway were bemused to discover that a new head is being parachuted in to run the prep department at the venerable Kings school, Rochester.

He is none other than Roger Overend, first championed and then sacked by the Dean of Westminster from the abbey's choir school after an exhaustive social services investigation found that he had bullied pupils over an extended period.

Challenged by the Rochester local paper to justify his choice, Kings school headmaster Ian Walker said: "It's not true that Mr Overend was asked to leave from Westminster Abbey choir school and the claims that he bullied the pupils are not true. I spoke to the Dean of Westminster Abbey at some length. The report from the social services is not true."

Puzzlingly, the Dean of Westminster, Dr Wesley Carr, has written to Westminster social services dissociating himself from Mr Walker's comments.

WHEN Douai abbey school, one of Britain's few remaining roman catholic public schools, closed in 1999 on the advice of John Hubert, former managing director of the *Eye's* favourite computer company, EDS (see *Eye* 983) parents and old boys who had fought hard to keep the school open were devastated.

They took some heart, however, from a clause in the Douai abbey trust's 1997 financial statement to the charities commission which promised that "the redundant school buildings will be available to be developed for charity purposes or to be let or sold on a commercial basis to fund the development of the charity's main objectives, realised through a monastic community".

Ironically, one of the main objectives of the Douai abbey trust is "the education of children and young persons in the roman catholic faith". Now the time has come to test whether this promise will be kept. Bewley Homes, a property developer which is leasing the site from Douai abbey, has lodged a planning application to convert the grade 2 listed former school building into 33 residential flats, with an additional 43 residential units where outbuildings now stand.

News of the planned development has outraged the campaigners who raised £800,000 in pledges of support to prevent the closure of the school, which was founded in 1615 and whose patrons included Ann Widdecombe and the Duke of Norfolk. Their commitment counted for little, however, in the face of the financial advice offered to the monks by Hubert, a man with considerable experience of such matters to draw on. In 1994, Hubert was instrumental in closing down another catholic boarding school at Belmont abbey in Herefordshire, and setting up a company called Benedomus Limited to develop the school buildings, designed by Augustus Pugin's son, into upmarket properties.

The beleaguered parents and old boys of Douai wonder how many more national treasures are set to be turned into posh Wimpey homes..

YOUNG BRITISH ARTISTS BY BIRCH

We first moved here for the cheap studio space. Look at it now!
Unknown artists can't even begin to afford it!
THE OLD FEVER HOSPITAL, HOXTON
LOFTS 4 SALE FROM £350K
BROOM CUPBOARD TO RENT. £20,000 P.A. SUIT MINIATURIST
It makes my blood boil!
We could have bought some old dump years ago, and made a killing!
I know, I know.

Letters

Come again

Sir,

The advertising department of the Express had no hand in censorship of the Omax Rechargeable Massager advertisement (Eye 1032).

The long-running, yellow-striped "It'd Get an Org--m Out of a St--e!" ad is not censored by those fleshpots of sin Fam-ly Circle, G--d Housek--ping, Wom-n's Journal or TV Times either. All across the UK news-stands, your favourite massager ad is run just as submitted – self-censored, with strategically placed hyphens, by ourselves, Omax.

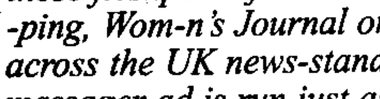
Private Eye's advertising dept has declined the very same advert on five occasions in four years. So for open-minded, liberal, multi-org--mic Private Eye to be taking pot shots at the Express is quite ironic.

Never mind. If you'd like, give me a ring and tell us where to send the free office samples for you and your colleagues to censor.

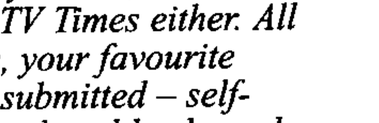
Yours,
MARTIN COOPER,

MD/Product Designer/Teaboy, Omax, Hemel Hempstead.

Lookalike



Blair



Button

Sir,

Revealed! The actual reason Tony paid back Bernie's million... to get his illegitimate love child a Formula One drive!

His obviously made-up name, Jenson Button, only goes to substantiate my theory.

Yours faithfully,
PHILIP CARTER,

London SW14.

Good snog

Sir,

If my parents had met a stuffed aardvark wearing a blue rosette they would have voted for it, hence I am a lifelong Liberal. However David Davis was my MP for many years, and proved to be of the highest calibre, punctilious in answering letters and always referring your problem to the correct person so quick results ensued.

He is also a good kisser (I live in a blue rinse and pink gin hamlet, so am forced to attend Tory coffee mornings) he picked my raffle ticket out, I won first prize, and was so overcome that I crushed him to my bosom and got a lovely wet smacker.

Backbiter (Eye 1032) has misjudged him sorely – he's the one leader who MIGHT just have got me to vote Conservative – utterly normal, no side to him, a lovely person. The only thing he ever did wrong was to fill his pond when there was a hosepipe ban. A big row in the Goole Times about that!

All power to your mighty organ.

From the boondocks,
MRS MARGARET WHITAKER,

Harswell, Yorks.

Sir Bufton writes...

Sir,

Your sneers about brigadiers in the Torygraph (Eye 1032) either shows you don't read their obits or consider the bravery of these 2nd World War veterans were merely the schoolboy antics of a lot of Bufton Tuftons.

I suppose it's too much to expect the present generation to honour the contribution of these men and women (now sadly dying out) who helped sustain the democracy today's yoof so undeservedly enjoys.

Yours faithfully,
VERNON GIBBERD,

London SE5.

Old fart at play

Sir,

Although it has not yet begun to threaten my subscription, the increasing tendency for your letters page to be filled with pedants inflicting their sad neuroses on the rest of us by pointing out inane minutiae that concern no one but themselves, seems to be getting worse. I bet that at this very moment someone is preparing to point out the inaccuracy in Mike Barfield's "Apparently" cartoon concerning captains and their instruments – namely that although Captain Beefheart provided lead vocals, backing vocals, reading, harmonica, bass clarinet, tenor sax, soprano sax, jingle bells, wings on Singabus, whistling, Chinese gongs, tin whistle and prop horn, inter alia, on his many records, he never played guitar on any of them.

JOHN WRAY,

Via e-mail.

Well, lick my decals

Sir,

I don't know about the others, but I'm pretty sure the electric guitar is about the only instrument you won't find multi-talented Captain Beefheart playing: he ordered his crew to do that for him.

Yours trout maskingly,
STUART McLAREN,

Via e-mail.

● *And thanks to the other 193 ageing freaks who made the same point...*

Bone heads

Sir,

Your piece in the Media News (Eye 1032) unfairly maligns Stephen "Jurassic" Hutt for misidentifying fossils on the BBC2's now infamous Live From Dinosaur Island extravaganza. The identification of fossil bone can be a difficult task in the field. Both bone and wood are fibrous substances, and once replaced by minerals during the fossilisation process, both become heavy and, in the case of fossils from the Isle of Wight, turn black. When fossil bones and fossil wood come out of the ground, they are covered in dirt and difficult to see. For this very reason careful preparation of any object discovered takes place in a carefully managed laboratory. It is usually here where a firm identification is made.

As for a Moroccan fossil turning up at Steve's site, I can only say that someone clearly set him up. If I am right, then surely it is some other scurrilous individual that deserves ridicule and not someone who was merely going about his daily business.

I was one of the examiners for Mr Hutt's MSc thesis, which was a scholarly piece of work, and I can assure you that he is a bone hunter of some considerable talent worthy of praise rather than mockery.

Yours,
DAVE MARTILL,

Reader in Paleobiology, University of Portsmouth.

Sad life

Sir,

I have just received a notice from your subscription department telling me that my annual subscription is about to expire. I regret that I will not be renewing this and I think that, as a courtesy, I ought to explain that this is in no way due to dissatisfaction with the magazine.

Life today is such that one is obliged to spend more and more time in coping with the blunders and sheer incompetence of government in all its multifarious manifestations and with the unreliability and abysmal levels of service of business. This leaves a rapidly diminishing amount of one's time for self education or amusement.

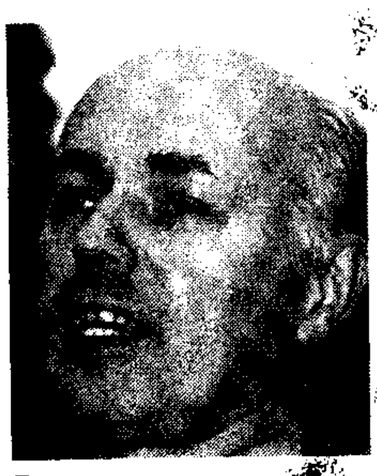
The magazine has given me many hours of pleasure; it performs a vital function in today's world but when life reaches the point at which the last three issues still remain unread, it's regrettably time to call a halt.

I wish you every success in your important work.

Yours faithfully,
J. F. MONTGOMERIE,

Helensburgh, Dunbartonshire.

Lookalike



Burns

Duncan Smith

Sir,

Has anyone noticed the resemblance between Iain Duncan Smith and Montgomery Burns, scheming Machiavellian owner of an unsafe nuclear power plant in The Simpsons?

I'm relieved that the resemblance is merely physical and that it isn't possible to make any other connection between an evil megalomaniac who puts personal gain before the safety of the public and, er...

MARTIN LOWE,

Nottingham.

A right accountant

Sir,

"How PFI Works" is the heading above a section on Altcourse prison (Eye 1032) that reveals, er, well sadly all it reveals is that you have no idea how PFI works. I defer to no one in the strength of my opposition to PFI, which is quite clearly "a bad thing". However, I can't help thinking that the arguments against it will be better served by printing something that makes sense and not the complete bollocks favoured by your good self. In this case, without any doubt, the government is correct to say that your comparison is unfair. You have to allow for the capital repayment, exactly as they say. This doesn't of course mean that the deal is a good one, but it is never going to be £800m worse than public sector alternative as claimed by you.

I understand that in your capacity as a feared satirical magazine publisher you sometimes take cant and humbug wherever you find it. Perhaps in your capacity as an arts graduate and journalist you should take advice from an accountant before venturing into the strange exotic world of numbers.

Yours,
GRAHAM HILL,
Via e-mail.

Fcuking hlel

Sir,

Well done for having a pop at French Connection (Ad Nauseam, Eye 1032). As you say, their continued playing upon the "ever-so-naughty 'fuck' pun" is so boring as to defy description.

They also deserve "a kicking" simply because they nicked the whole "fcuk" idea (surprise) from the much-missed guitar combo The Family Cat. This fine band used that arrangement of letters as the prefix to the catalogue numbers of their excellent records several years before French Connection surprised us with their naughtiness (and bare-faced theft).

BARRIE FRANCIS,
Cardiff, Wales.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"I got on with the Asian Community like a house on fire."
Former Lord Mayor of Bradford, BBC
(William McQuillan)

"And he [Zidane] will have a private pool, with a gardener thrown in."
DES CAHILL, Irish Radio RTE
(Declan Martin)

"I have to sit down with him and see where we stand."
ARSENE WENGER, Grauniad
(R. Head)

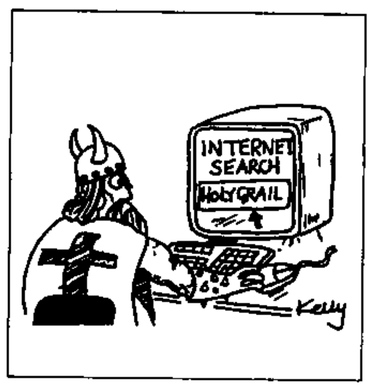
"The police were literally swimming in a sea of red herrings..."
SUN reporter, BBC1
(Aidan O'Flanagan)

"England have played pretty well... just their cricket let them down."
IAN SMITH, Channel 4
(Roger Steel)

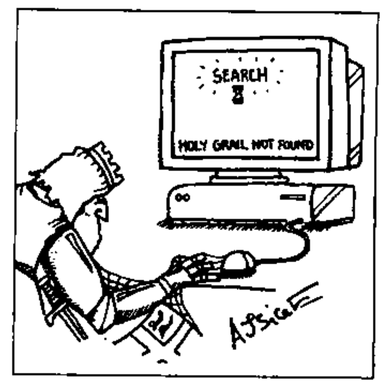
Davies Arnold Cooper. Last week. *The Lawyer* incorrectly stated that Maurice Millen, who was leaving DAC to join Macfarlanes, was a senior lawyer. Millen was DAC's head of IT. We apologise to the two firms for any inconvenience this may have caused. We would also like to apologise to Millen for any embarrassment caused by calling him a lawyer.

The Lawyer

Lookalike



Eye 989



Eye 1032

Sir,

Is the cartoon on page 7, Eye 1032 related in any way to the cartoon on page 19, Eye 989?

I think we should be told.

Yours sincerely,
KEVIN PATON,
Via e-mail.

MUSIC & MUSICIANS

THE ORGANISERS of the recent Pavarotti in Hyde Park event were making hourly checks not only on the weather but on Pavarotti's mother's state of health – which is essential these days when you book the overweight Italian.

Several days before his park appearance he was scheduled to join a starry line-up (Placido Domingo, Renee Fleming *et al*) at the Spoleto festival for a gala concert to celebrate the 90th birthday of the composer Menotti. But right up to the point of his arrival on the morning of the concert he was playing hard to get – sending messages to say he might sing (if his mother was OK) but then he might not (if she wasn't).

When he finally arrived, he found a different reason not to sing. The young soprano, one of LP's *protégés*, engaged at his request to join him in a duet from *La Boheme,* had discovered that her name had been left off the advance publicity and was threatening to withdraw her services. With no soprano there'd be no duet and no Luciano.

After desperate intercessions from the frail Menotti – who deserved an easier birthday – the soprano recanted in return for a grovelling apology, which was duly issued at a press conference two hours later. As the TV cameras rolled, she said how much Menotti's music meant to her. Then Pavarotti said how much Menotti's music meant to *him*. His mother, thankfully, was much improved. And everything seemed sorted out – until the concert itself when Alberto Vilar (the financier who seems to pay for every glitzy musical event throughout the world, Menotti's birthday bash included) took to the platform and said what a pleasure it was to be writing cheques for his dear friend Placido and dear friend Renee. No mention of dear Luciano.

Somewhere backstage, dear Luciano went to the conductor, pointed to his throat and said "I no sing". Whereupon he got into a car and made a swift departure, leaving his *protégé* partnerless, and leaving Menotti to stagger back on stage to tell the audience that, regretfully, Maestro Pavarotti's mother had taken a turn for the worse.

Letter from **Tokyo**

from Our Own Correspondent

WITH ELECTIONS approaching and our once mighty economy wallowing in the mire, it might seem the moment for our perpetually flaccid opposition finally to mount a serious challenge to the Liberal Democrat Party (LDP) cronies, corrupt and complacent after generations in power. But instead the popularity of Junichiro Koizumi, our dashing prime minister, is climbing to ever more giddy heights, his forthcoming victory a certainty. How has he managed this amazing feat of political alchemy?

The secret of Koizumi's success is to present himself as the outsider, ready to take on those faceless elements and factions that have captured the LDP's soul and brought Japan low. His main target is the network established in the 1970s by Kakuei Tanaka, our late, disgraced prime minister, which still has many connections on the inside – including the officials who rubber-stamp the pointless pork barrel projects which go out to the constituencies, the bridges that lead nowhere and extravagant dams for which there is no purpose other than to benefit our political community and their pals in the construction industry. It's a neat ploy.

The irony is that Koizumi's success thus far has been made possible by none other than Makiko Tanaka, the old crook's daughter, who is now our flamboyant foreign minister. She believes those who now control her father's legacy are guilty of betrayal. He also started out as the great outsider, the outspoken rough diamond with no friends in the establishment. But in 1983 he was caught up in a grubby bribery scandal. Although he was convicted and sent to jail for his part in the scam, a vast tranche of the loot was never recovered. When Tanaka died eight years ago, he left Makiko a handsome bequest. Few doubt that the capacity to "influence" the party arising from such a generous inheritance helped our prime minister's rise to the top last October. So it seems Koizumi may be using Tanaka's own wad to destroy the old man's faction!

What is not clear is how long our PM and his foreign minister can continue to get along. Makiko says she has no ambitions on the top job. Any woman who had would need a very thick skin, as well as the low cunning and broad connections we expect from all our leaders. She certainly has resources and influence at home. Abroad, she has friends in useful places, including Beijing, which is still grateful to her old man for following Nixon and Kissinger into establishing diplomatic ties in the 1970s.

She also appears tough enough to handle most things. We remember the occasion in early 1995 when, while in charge of the prestigious but decrepit science and technology agency, she brazenly assured us that although the Kobe earthquake of that year had devastated all kinds of "shock-proof" buildings, she was certain Japan's nuclear power stations were "absolutely safe".

When asked how she could be so sure, she explained that it was because she had said they were. That's the kind of leader we need.

HOM SAP

AUSTIN

FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH

"These women are becoming a big problem," a spokesman for the Bogota police admitted to reporters, "although as yet we don't know exactly what drug they're using. But we do know that they are smearing their breasts with a powerful sedative paste, then standing at the side of the road in wealthy parts of the city, and striking seductive poses to lure male drivers. When one pulls over, they get into the car, talk to the man, and

somehow persuade him to start licking their breasts.

"Usually the men don't need much persuading, but as soon as they start licking they lose all willpower, and fall unconscious. When they wake up, several hours later, they find themselves sitting on the sidewalk, with no wallet, no car, and no memory of what happened. It's incredible, but some men have fallen for this scam three or four times, and even go back to the same place looking for the same women, even though they get robbed every time. They seem to think it's worth it." *(Chemist & Druggist, 9/6/01. Spotter: David Evans)*

— o —

o *"These pacu fish weren't found in Papua New Guinea until recently," marine biologist Ian Middleton told reporters in Port Moresby, "and we think they've probably been introduced here from Indonesia, or possibly Brazil. They're related to piranhas, and have colonised the Sepik river, but they've only recently started biting humans, presumably because of a lack of naturally occurring food."*

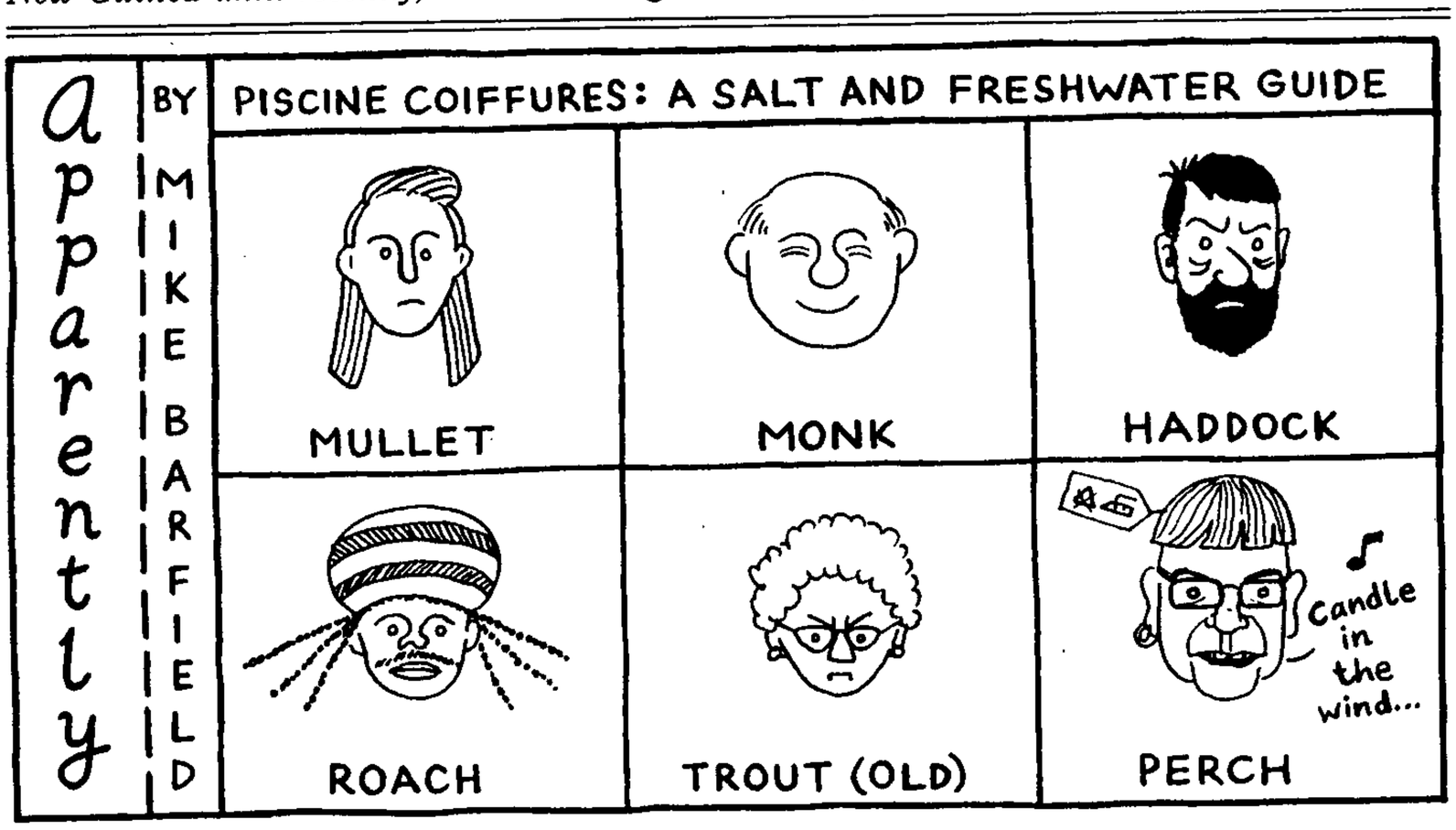
Middleton was speaking after the death of two fisherman, who bled to death after having their penises bitten off by pacu fish in the Sepik river, in north-western PNG. "The reason for them biting people on the genitals is a result of the fish detecting a chemical change in the water, swimming up the urine trail, and biting the penis. This behaviour is well-documented in the Amazon. The pacu was introduced here in 1994 as a food-source fish by the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation, but in retrospect maybe that wasn't such a good idea." (AAP, 6/7/01. Spotter: Andrew Baume)

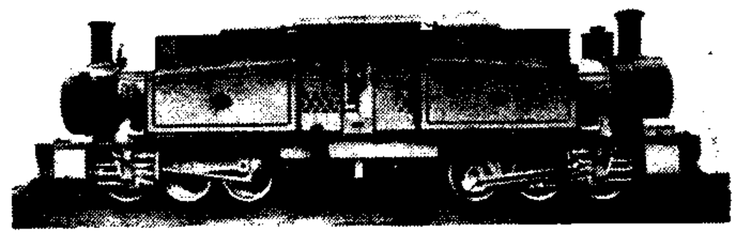
— o —

o"It was a moment of madness," admitted farmer Dave Phillips, as he recalled the low-speed police chase which he had precipitated in South Molton, Devon. "I was driving my tractor along the A361 when the police spotted me. I didn't have number plates, so when they pulled me over I thought 'what am I going to do?' When they asked me for my registration number, I just started talking Spanish. I don't actually speak Spanish, but they didn't either, so I kept on talking a loud scribble language and making big hand gestures for about ten minutes. Then I don't know what came over me, because I suddenly turned the tractor around and headed off across the fields.

"My tractor has a top speed of 22mph, but I knew the ground was boggy, and police cars aren't built for that, so I just kept on going. For three hours I went on, with them behind, over field tracks, across streams, and through hedges. I even criss-crossed the river Yeo to try and shake them off. Eventually I dumped the tractor and made for the house of a gamekeeper friend. He told me off for being so stupid, and took me for a drink at the Black Cock Inn, near Molland, and arranged to hand me over.

"I don't really know why I pretended to be Spanish. It just seemed like a good idea at the time. I think the police thought I was an illegal immigrant, that's why they took it so seriously. They're sending me a traffic summons in the post, which is a pity, because I was hoping they'd deport me back to Spain. I could do with a month in the sun." *(Tiverton Gazette, 7/7/01. Spotter: David Graham)*





SIGNAL FAILURES

The beam in Byers's eye

WHEN a public-private partnership such as the rail system fails to deliver, the private sector players can expect a slagging off from their public partners.

Transport secretary Stephen Byers told the Commons this month that the rail industry should "stop passing the buck and take responsibility for providing a world-class rail service". It must "put its house in order".

The rail industry, with the exception of Railtrack, *has* got its house in order. Its job is not to run a punctual, safe and comfortable network *per se* but to generate profits by providing at minimum cost whatever service it can get away with. That is underlined by the strategic rail authority's awarding of new franchises to companies with poor records on safety or punctuality.

It is the job of the Government and Byers to restructure the railway so that punctuality, safety and comfort replace profit at the top of the agenda. Instead of doing that job they continue to dissemble and to criticise the very companies they choose to support with masses of taxpayers' money.

The health and safety executive (HSE) plays a similar game. Last month Vic Coleman, chief inspector of railways, accused the industry of hiding behind improving statistics: "Paddington should have been a wake-up call, but for those who smugly pointed to the statistics and hid behind the truth of others, I have a clear message: Do better or get out."

In January 1998 the *Eye* (942) accused the HSE of "trying to convince the world that everything on the fragmented rail system is tickety-boo". We warned that "when a safety body becomes apparently blasé, the result could be ... damaging", that Railtrack was not treating the HSE with respect and that one point "needing attention is that of trains passing red signals". As if to prove our point, the HSE promptly complained about the article (Letters, *Eye* 943), listing a number of improving statistics and appealing for "credit where it is due".

That article was one of hundreds of wake-up calls – including crashes and near misses – Coleman and the HSE missed before the 1999 Paddington crash because they were hiding behind improving statistics. There were countless warnings before and during privatisation that the new structure would need stricter policing than British Rail had. The HSE should have raised so many objections about creation of unnecessary risks that the excessive fragmentation of BR and privatisation of Railtrack might have been changed or abandoned.

It took nearly 40 deaths in train accidents for the HSE to realise the new system is a nightmare for safety regulators. The HSE's naïveté is highlighted in the recent report on the Paddington train crash where Jenny Bacon, former director general of the HSE, is quoted: "The idea of BR's public-sector responsibility as something to be relied on has died very hard. Reality has not lived up to expectations but expectation has affected the HMRI's [her majesty's railway inspectorate's] attitudes to industry standards, to enforcement and checking follow up and follow through. HSE as a whole were assuming compliance and that duty holders would exercise their responsibilities, as that was very much part and parcel of what we had expected from BR."

It remains to be seen whether the HSE is still "assuming compliance" from a rail industry whose over-riding priority is money, not safety or service, but it's already clear the new government and its transport secretary will simply assume, or pretend, they have a compliant rail industry for the rest of this parliament.

'Dr B. Ching'

ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

Incumbent: Rev. A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)

Hullo!

As you all know, I have recently been setting out some very important new proposals for the reorganisation of the parish and the way we run our services.

At the heart of my restructuring of St Albion's is the idea that our local businesses can join forces with us, to create the kind of vibrant, pivotal church for the 21st century that we all want.

The sort of ideas we've been discussing are really exciting. For instance:

● THE SPONSORED PEW SCHEME, under which local businessmen such as Mr Murdoch of the Adult Vids and Mags Centre donate money for the upkeep of the pews, in return for which each seat will have a hassock embroidered with the logo of the firm concerned.

● PARISH COFFEE MORNINGS. These will in future be franchised to our high street coffee shop The Cappuccino Experience. This makes good housekeeping sense.

● SUNDAY SCHOOL. As parents know, we have had only limited space in the vestry for our very popular kids inter-faith workshop sessions. But the manager of McDonald's fast food has volunteered to put his premises at our disposal. This will enable our toddlers to learn about not only the familiar bible stories, but also the very important world of "shakes 'n' fries"!

● MAKING BETTER USE OF THE CHURCH TOWER. As you know, we have already arranged an auction for mobile phone companies to bid for use of our church tower as a telecommunications mast (please – no more letters on the possible health hazards, as these have been fully investigated by Mr Campbell, and only a tiny percentge of children get leukaemia). But it has now been proposed that we should offer the tower to Mr Bush for use as a rocket-launching pad as part of his Star Wars plan.

Hey, these are just a few of the exciting ideas that we are now kicking around at PCC meetings.

But, unfortunately, there are still a few diehards among our older parishioners, like Mr Morris and Mr Edmunds, who see all these new proposals as in some way a threat to the cosy way of life they have been used to for far too long.

Look, it's time these people realised that there's no such thing as a job for life any longer! Even I don't expect to be your vicar for more than perhaps another 20 years!

So, what I say to the Morrises and Edmundses of our parish is what I say to all the cynics and the doubters who are blind to all our amazing achievements

since I became your vicar four years ago: as Our Lord himself said, "Get a life"!

This is such an important message that I have based a chorus on it, to be sung at the evening service this Sunday once our "Body and Soul" Aerobics Class (sponsored by Holland and Barrett) has dispersed.

CHORUS
For everyone who's living,
Be they husband, be they wife,
Get a life! Get a life!

No matter how you're feeling,
Whether happy or in strife,
Get a life! Get a life!

When you're sitting at your table
With your fork and spoon and knife,
Get a life! Get a life!

(Words and music, T. Blair)
See you around!

Tony

Parish Postbag

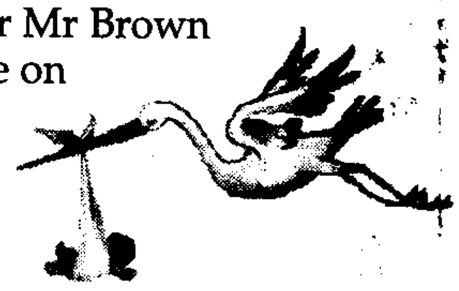
Dear Sir,

I would like to protest in the strongest possible terms at the disgraceful treatment of my American friend Mr Kiley. He has very kindly come over here to help us out in any way he can and the Vicar and Mr Brown have behaved shabbily and with a total lack of

Yours sincerely,
KEN LIVINGSTONE,
Newts R Us Aquatic Pet Centre
(and Chair High Street Traffic Action Group)

The Editor reserves the right to cut letters for reasons of lack of space. A.C.

Congratulations...



...to our treasurer Mr Brown and his new wife on the announcement that they are expecting a happy event! I know that some people are saying that 50 is far too old to become a father for the first time, and Gordon is probably only doing it as a publicity stunt! Of course, this is very unfair on Mr Brown, who may not even have planned to hear the pitter-patter of tiny feet so soon after he got married.

All the same, it may well be that Gordon will find it rather a strain trying to combine being the father of a young baby with doing such an important and taxing job. Were he to wish to extend his paternity leave for an indefinite period, I would be the last person to stand in his way! Indeed, I would welcome it! Well done, Gordon (and, of course, Sarah!). And if parishioners have any suggestions for a suitable "goodbye" present, please contact me via my website. T.B.

BLESS YOU!

The Vicar of Dibley drops in at the vicarage with a donation for Comic Relief. Says Rev French: "I've always been a great fan of Tony. He always makes me laugh when I see him on the telly."

Committee Round-Up

Mr Cook writes: I am pleased to make it clear that it was never my intention that Mrs Dunwoody and Mr Anderson should be removed from their posts as chairpersons of two of our important committees. It was entirely due to a misunderstanding that many parishioners wrote in to protest and to call for their reinstatements. They have now been reinstated on the committees in question, albeit in a different capacity, and I do not wish to hear any more nonsense about this. R.C.

VOICE OF The Moron

Conman who had them all fooled

HOW DID he ever get away with it? For years he held a position of authority, while at the same time lying and cheating to hold onto his job.

To many he was just a cheeky chappie, a loveable rogue with the gift of the gab.

But now the truth has been revealed. All along he was a share-dealing shyster who "filled his boots" and made up stories to cover his tracks.

One thing is certain. We will not be taken in by the likes of Piers Morgan ever again.

THE TOAD I KNEW

by Our Man in Court **Kenneth Grahame**

ACQUAINTANCES of Mr Toad, who was sentenced to four years yesterday for the theft of a motor vehicle, were last night quick to distance themselves from the disgraced former grandee of Toad Hall.

Said Mr Ratty Rat of Riverside Villas: "I always knew he was a wrong 'un. Yes, we went to his parties and drank his champagne but we could tell all along that he would come to no good."

End of the Toad

Added another acquaintance, Mr Mole, "I turned a blind eye for many years to his obvious character defects. It was only going to be a matter of time before he ended up in prison."

Witty diarist and panel-game regular Mr Gyles Badger told the *Eye* "Whatever else you say about Mr. Toad, he was a hugely entertaining figure and larger than life character who added colour to the criminal world. He reminded many of us of that famous fictional character Lord Archer."

On other pages

The Women in Toad's Life **94**

Dr. Stuttaford – "Toad was Manic Depressive" **95**

Publishers Bid for Toad's Prison Diaries **96**

Why I Support Duncan Smith by TV's Charles Moore **97**

"In retrospect perhaps it wasn't such a good idea to get married in your mother's dress"

SAD FAREWELL TO THE MAESTRO OF THE DISPATCH BOX

THE HOUSE of Commons was packed to the rafters yesterday to witness the final onslaught by the greatest parliamentarian of this or any other age – William Hague.

MPs on both sides lamented the departure of the man responsible for some of the greatest put-downs in the history of the House of Commons.

His Finest Hours

To Mr Blair

"Are you having a bad blair day?"

To John Prescott

"Wake up, I'm asking you a question!"

On Lord Archer

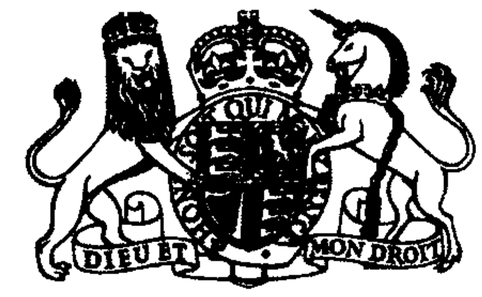
"There is no question of Jeffrey's probity. He will make an excellent Lord Mayor."

On his own plans

"I am resigning. Goodbye."

To Mr Blair

"Congratulations on winning the election."



CAUGHT CIRCULAR

MRS LOLA ARCHER

The funeral took place yesterday at Cambridge Crematorium of Mrs Lola Archer.

A procession was formed as follows:

First Black Maria
Prisoner 74692 Archer J
Warder Ebenezer Screw
Inspector "Knacker of the Yard"
Knacker

Second Car
Mrs Mary Archer
A Companion

Third Car
Sid Hack (representing the *Sun*)
Vince Snaps (representing the *News of the World*)
Mr Lunchtime O'Booze (*Private Eye*)
Mr Phil Space (*Private Eye*)

Fourth Car
Mr Georgian Snipcock
Mr Jeremy Tweed

Fifth Car
Empty
(Reserved for friends)

That's enough cars. Ed.

THIS WEEK

SHERIDAN MORLEY

What is your earliest memory of a spoon?

I have a clear memory of being in my pram when Noël Coward bent over and presented me with a sweet little silver teaspoon commemorating the coronation of King George VI. Years later, when I met Noël in Las Vegas, I mentioned the incident but, interestingly, he could remember nothing of it.

Do you have any other associations of spoons with famous people?

My father, Robert Morley, the well-known actor, was very fond of spoons of all kinds. So they were always around in the house when I was young. It's fascinating to think of some of the famous people who must have used the spoons at one time or another. I am thinking of people like Dame Edith Evans, Johnny Gielgud, Larry Olivier, Noël and, of course, my father himself.

Do you have a lucky spoon?

No, but someone who did, and whom I was fortunate enough to know, was Rex Harrison, a much under-rated actor in my view and one of the funniest men I have ever met. He told me once that he never went on the set without "my lucky spoon". He showed it to me once when I went backstage at the Haymarket when he was giving his Shotover in *Heartbreak House*.

Do you think we'll still be using spoons in 50 years' time?

I remember Maggie Smith once saying to me when I went to see her backstage after a performance of *The Doll's House*, "Darling, none of us live for ever." Doesn't that say it all?

Have you ever thought of shaving your beard off?

No.

Next week: David Beckham

"MY VISION FOR ROYAL RENEWAL"

Prince Charles Appeals for Help

by Our Agriculture Staff **Paul Footandmouth**

THE TRAGIC events of the last few months have left the Royal Community "demoralised, depressed – even suicidal."

So claimed the Prince of Wales yesterday launching a deeply-felt personal appeal to provide support for the Royal victims of a series of crises.

FOOT IN MOUTH

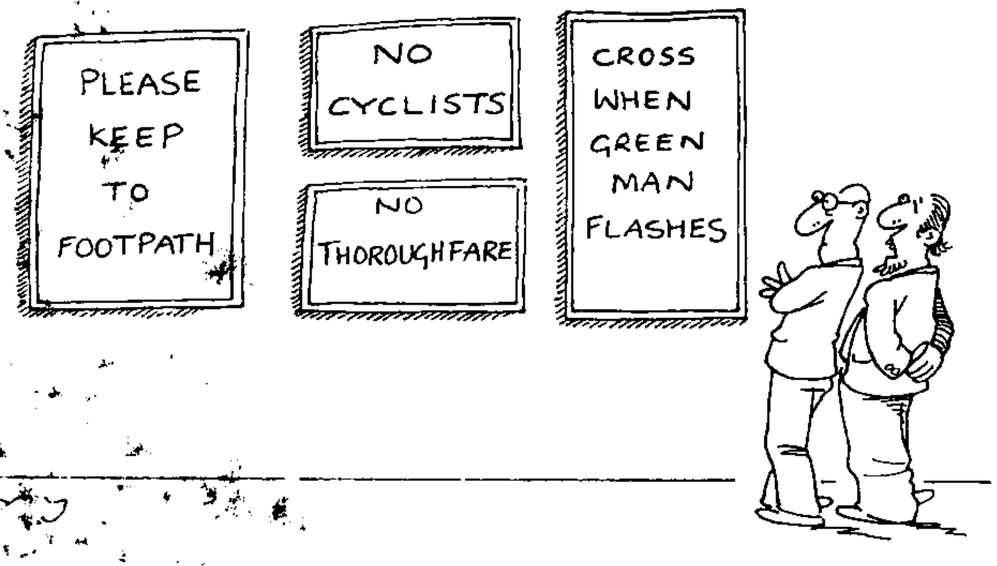
"It really is appalling" said the Prince. "Our special needs have been ignored by government and the media. The stress has been terrible, putting marriages and careers at risk."

One Royal is known to have become so disillusioned that he has been forced to take up a career as a TV producer making "crap films that no one watches".

Another leading Royal and former Olympic horsewoman is currently said to be experiencing marital difficulties which she blames on the crisis which has affected the whole monarchy.

But opponents of the Prince's appeal have pointed out that the Royals already receive "vast amounts of subsidy" in the form of Government handouts.

"They should stop whingeing and get on with the job of opening leisure centres in Bracknell," said one critic.



"His work is so pedestrian"

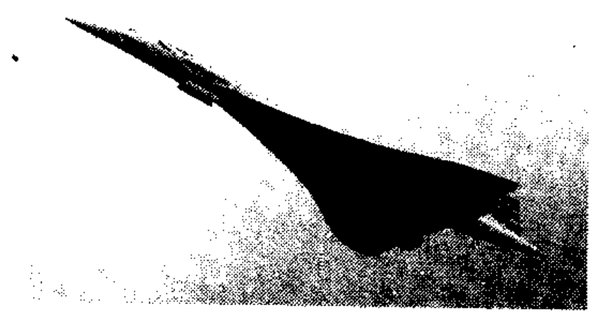
PLANE FLIES WITHOUT CRASHING

by Our Aviation Correspondent **Conor Corde**

THERE was amazement throughout the aviation world as a plane took off, flew around a bit, then landed again without turning into a fireball.

"It's incredible, I never thought I'd see anything like this in my lifetime," said a senior BA pilot. "The fact it could travel in the air means that the future of air travel is assured.

"Who knows, one day we may see thousands of people every day travelling in the air without crashing."



CONCORDE STORIES RESUME

THE return this week of gushing PR pieces about Concorde into the newspapers has been declared an unqualified success.

"We thought these poorly written puff pieces had been mothballed forever after the plane blew up over Paris," said one delighted Editor, "but they quickly took off, and soon were travelling into the news pages at twice the speed of logic."

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Jeffrey Archer

1. Manipulating cheat who indulged in a string of affairs

2. Lied under oath

3. Solicited grubby sex from a woman called Monica

4. In a cell doing bend and stretch for 'Big Ron'

Bill Clinton

1. Manipulating cheat who indulged in a string of affairs

2. Lied under oath

3. Solicited grubby sex from a woman called Monica

4. Hard-selling his memoirs on a lecture tour for big bucks

ARCHER 'FIRST NIGHT TRIUMPH'

by our Theatre Correspondent **Benedict Nightinjail**

LORD Archer's first night in Belmarsh Prison in his sequel to *The Accused – The Convict* – has been hailed as an unqualified success.

"Seeing him stripped of his shirt, his pants, his belt and his freedom was incredible," said one warder. "Inmate number 71403 was a role he's been waiting all his lifetime to play.

"This could play to a packed prison for several years, if we're lucky."

THOSE BEIJING OLYMPICS

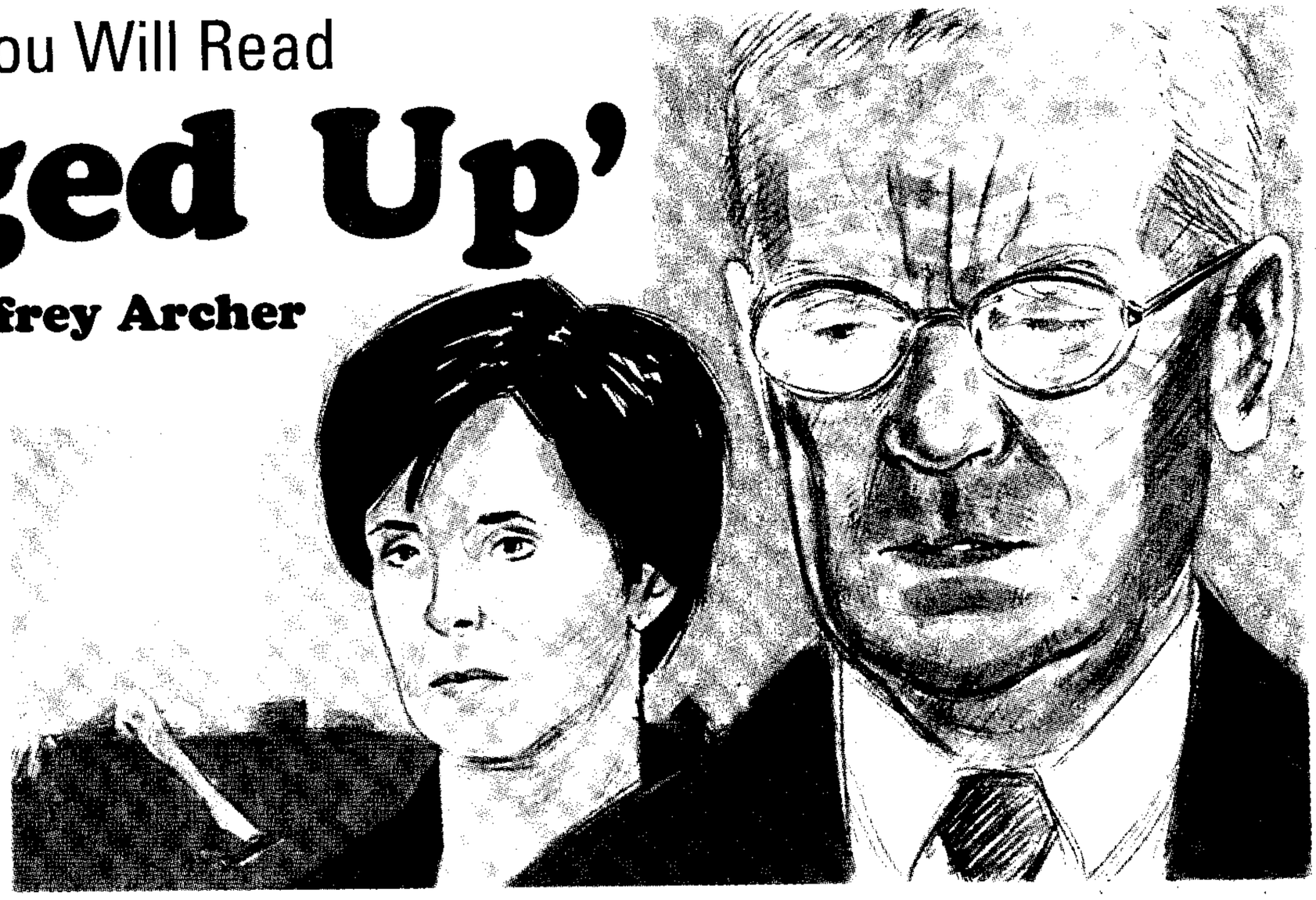
New Events

- **Shooting:** Student Target Event *(machine gun)*
- **Running Dog Races**
- **Putting The Shot** *(into the dissidents)*
- **High Jump** *(name of religion)*
- **Swimming** *(to Taiwan)*
- **Long March** *(4000 kilometres)*

What You Will Read

'Banged Up'

by Jeffrey Archer



A new novel by the world's best-selling author.

Now read on...

"How do you find – guilty or not guilty?" The foreman of the Jury stood solemnly as he faced the judge. "Guilty, Your Honour." Godfrey Bowman sat motionless, his world in ruins.

Yet he betrayed not one jot of what he felt. Beside him sat his faithful and fragrant wife, Margaret.

"Courage, Godfrey," she whispered. "You'll be alright. They won't send a great author like you to prison."

But it was not to be.

"Godfrey Bowman," declared the judge in solemn tones, "you have committed a grave and heinous crime. You are undoubtedly one of the most evil men who has ever stood before me in this court."

Bowman gasped inwardly. Yet still his steely blue eyes, which had put so many beautiful women under his spell, gave no hint of his inner turmoil.

"Regrettably," the judge continued, "in these so-called enlightened days it is not within my power to send you to the gallows. You will go to prison for four years and may God have mercy on your soul."

For a moment the packed courtroom reeled in shock. Then uproar broke out.

In the public gallery his former secretary the beautiful Adrina Farquharson-Dugdale collapsed in a swoon.

The shapely Annabella Lamont, for many years his most trusted confidante, threw herself to her death into the well of the court below.

"Silence!" cried the usher in a vain attempt to restore order to the court – that famous court where once Sir Oscar Wilde, Dr Crippen, and Lord Ha-Ha had heard their fate meted out just as he had.

Bowman stood erect. "Have you anything to say before you are taken down?"

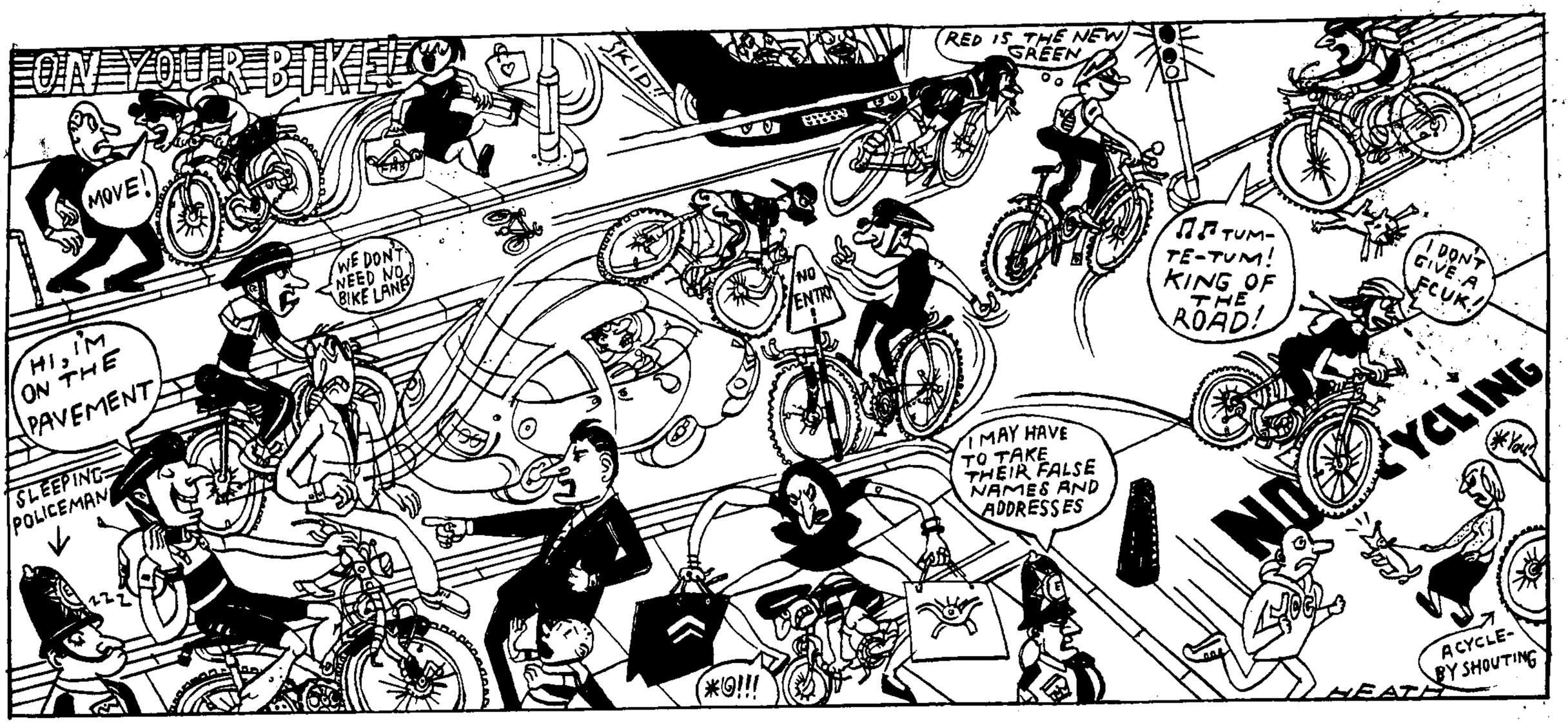
"Excuse me," interjected the world's most distinguished writer. "I hear my mobile ringing. Hullo? This is Godfrey. I'm a bit tied up..."

He recognised the unmistakeable tones of his literary agent Victor Edward.

"Godfrey, we've just heard the verdict on BBC Five Live. It's perfect. There's a great book in it. 'Banged Up' – your life in prison. One of our people has already started writing it for you. You'll make millions! It's the best news we've had for a long time."

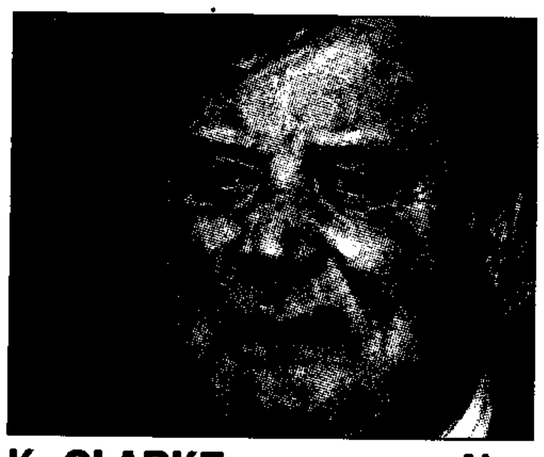
The End

HEATH'S PRIVATE VIEW

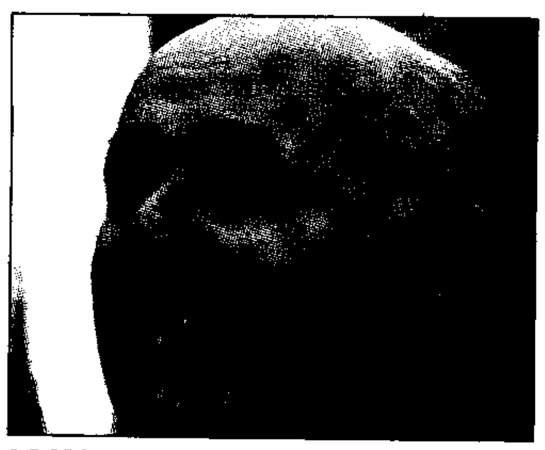


YOU CHOOSE THE NEW LEADER

AS the countdown begins to the biggest political event in Britain for decades, *Eye* readers are now given a unique chance to play their part in this historic tryst with destiny. All you have to do is choose your preferred candidate, and then list in order of merit the qualities you most admire in him.



K. CLARKE	No.
Beer belly	
Love of jazz	
Keen smoker	
Loves the euro	
Hush puppies	
Tobacco salesman	
Likes a drink	
Wants the job	
Er...	
...that's it.	



IAIN DUNCAN SMITH	No.
Bald	
Right-wing	
Ex-army officer	
Hates the euro	
Double-barrelled name	
Posh wife	
Once had job outside politics	
Devout Catholic	
Keen angler	
Uncanny resemblance to Karl Marx biographer Francis Wheen	

Now complete one of the following slogans in not more than 25 words:

1. *I want to see Ken Clarke as Tory leader because:*

.....

.....

2. *I have no idea who Iain Duncan Smith is, but if I did:*

.....

.....

"Hombrephobics the lot of 'em"

Letters to the Editor

SIR – If Mr Kenneth Clarke were ever to become leader of the Conservative Party, I for one would never vote Tory ever again.

GEORGE HEADBANGER
Kent

SIR – If Mr Iain Duncan Smith were ever to become leader of the Conservative Party, I for one would be forced to emigrate.

MONTY MIDDLEGROUND
Ex-Pat Club, Marbella, Spain

SIR – I have recently considered rejoining the Tory Party, only to find that they are considering electing as leader an unashamed Euro-phile who would do away with the pound and hand over our sovereignty to the faceless bureaucrats of Brussels. Not in a million years!

DOROTHY QUICKSAVE
Milton Keynes

SIR – I have recently considered rejoining the Tory Party only to find that they are considering electing as leader a raving, right-wing "little Englander" who would turn his back on Europe and bury his head in the sand. Not in a million years!

REV. K. STINKHORN
The Vicarage, Botley, Hants

SIR – Has the Tory Party taken leave of its senses? Just when at last it seemed it was about to choose a charismatic and dynamic leader who could have united the Party and taken us forward into a new millennium, he is cruelly tossed out on the final ballot. I refer of course to Sir Edward Heath.

B.B. BLASHFORD-SNELL
Clapham

SIR – As a lifelong Conservative, I am appalled by the spiteful language and offensive personal vilification which has characterised the recent leadership campaign. It is hard to know who has been the worst offender in this disgraceful war of words – the fat, idle slob Kenneth Clarke, with his beer-stained Barbour, the bald, non-descript toff Duncan Smith, or that foreign nancy-boy Portillo. When will we see the return of old-fashioned good manners?

DR VIJAY VERRUCA
Peebles

SIR – Why should we worry about electing a Conservative leader when we've already got Tony Blair?

MIKE GIGGLER
Via e-mail

TORY LEADERSHIP VOTE

Your cut out 'n' keep guide to how they voted – *(cont'd. from p. 1)*

Portillo Supporters (Cont'd.)
Sid Drain, Michael Strapling, Simon Basket, Nigel Wentworth-Day, Dr Barry Huskins

Ken Clarke Supporters
Kenneth Clarke, Norbert Woodgrove, Simon Madrigal, Jill Stortford, Timothy Peach, Crispin de Thark, Boris Johnson, Helen Belcher, Humphrey Attwood, Martin Blunt, Dominic Truslove, Peter Flasher, Nirj Nanbread, Sir Hector Pickles, Sir Basil Wantage

Preference Not Known
Jonathan Benfleet, Ian Glover, Sir Stanley Ward-Stoop, Theresa Barndale, Walter Ffitch, Christopher Carberry *(That's enough Tory MPs, Ed.)*

Crème de la Crème

AC/DC male with experience at highest level of British politics seeks opportunity to develop to his full potential in an exciting, challenging new role. Arts or media preferred though seven-figure salary from senior business position (eg, Chairman of Plc) is non-negotiable. Anything which should be legalised considered.

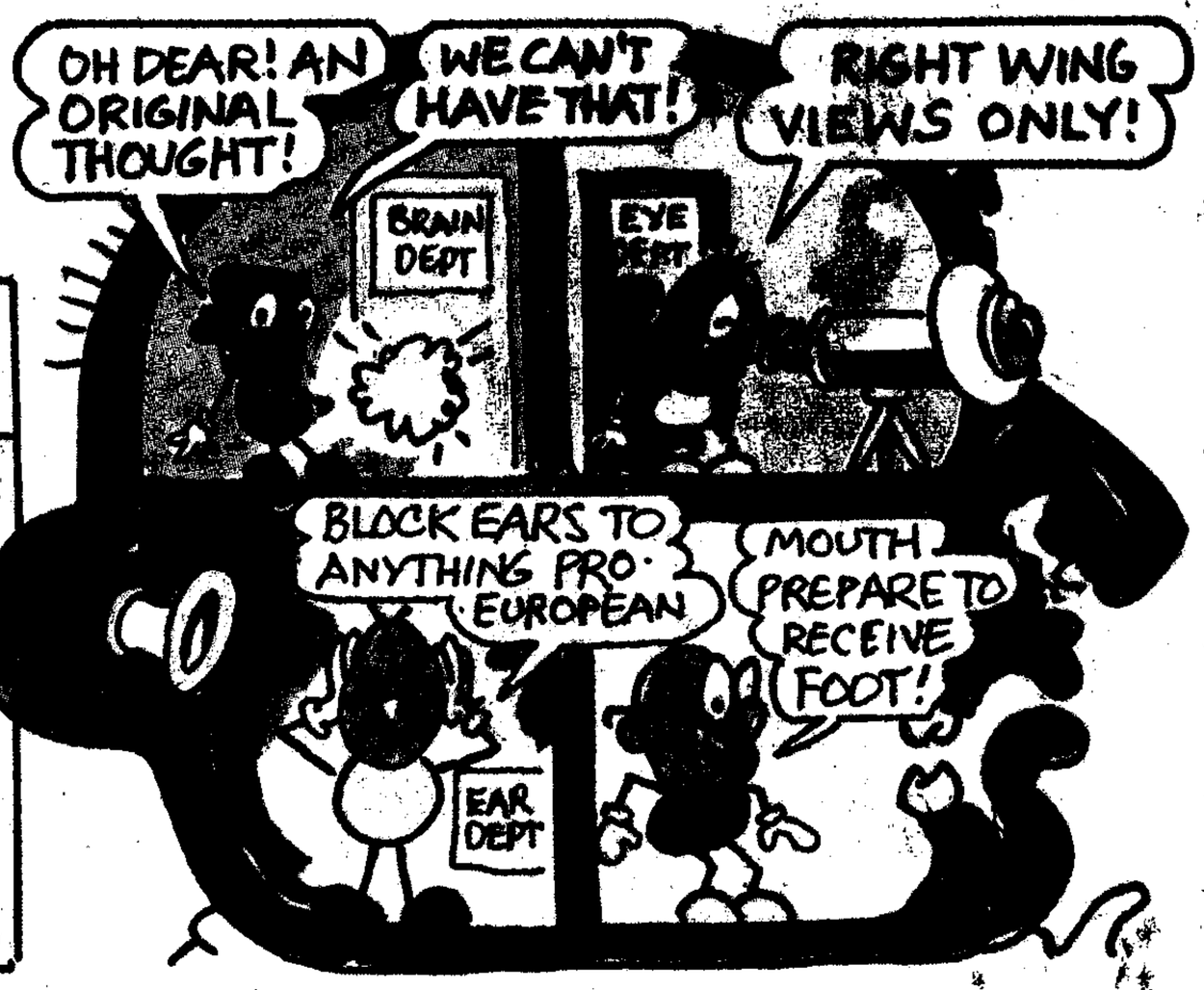
Apply Carolyn Portillo,
c/o Spencer Stuart, Headhunters

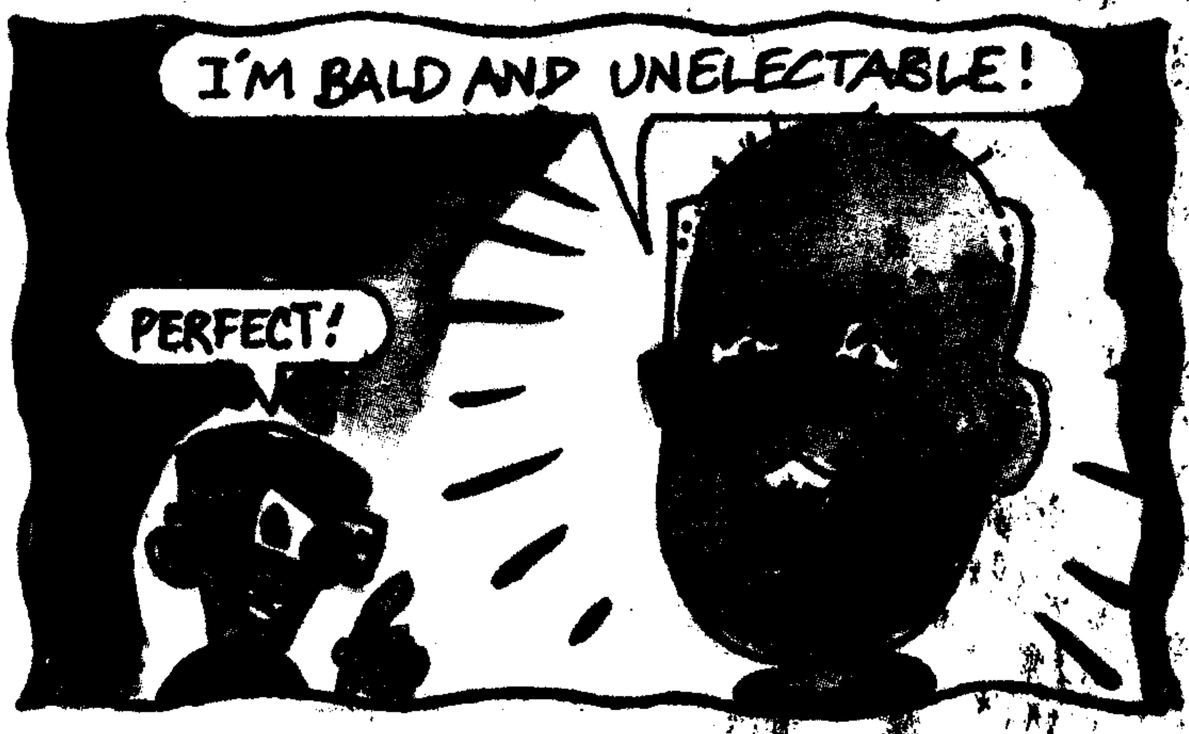
Lively, presentable former PA to very senior politician seeks openings in the media. Anything considered, though seven-figure salary is non-negotiable. References not available. Intimate video of applicant available on request.

Apply confidentially to
AP, Box 94

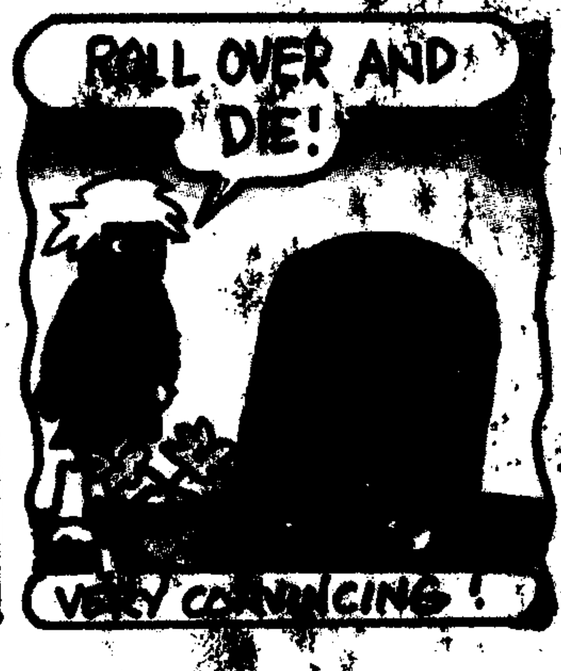
THE HAS-BEANO WITH BORIS THE MENACE

The Numskull



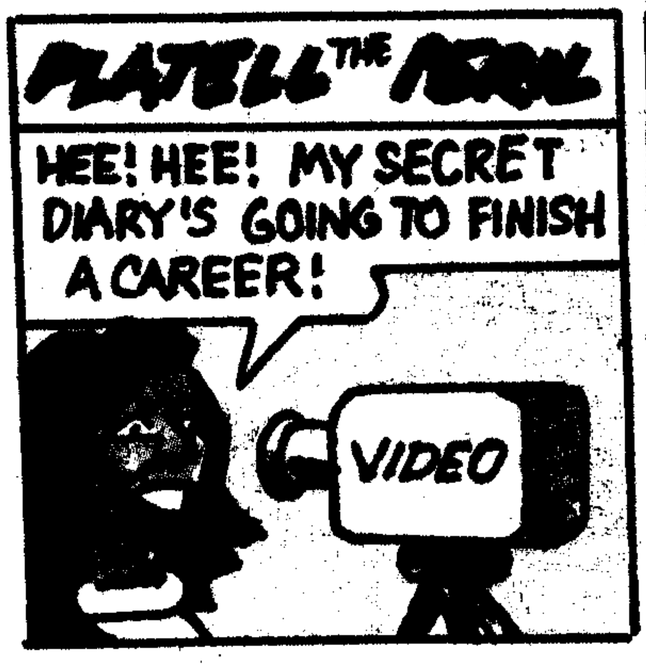


BORIS THE MENACE

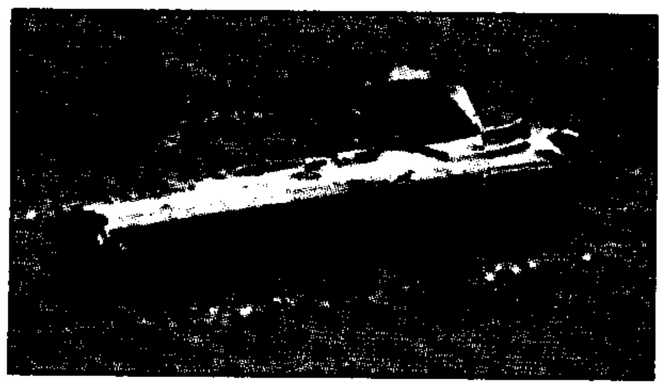


KILN BUNTER

PLATELL THE ARSON



Watch Out, There's A Copper About!



THINKING of going for a walk down the street? Be careful what you take with you! A cigarette lighter, even an umbrella, could easily be mistaken for a high-calibre machine gun of the type which killed Jill Dando. In which case, the forces of law and order would be fully justified in gunning you down to keep the streets of our inner cities free for decent, law-abiding citizens to walk down unharmed.

ONE DEAD EVERY MINUTE

In today's fight against crime, speed is of the essence. That is why every year more and more people are run over by our highly-trained motorised division, as they race to the scene of another parking offence at speeds of up to 103mph.

Our advice is:

- leave your car at home
- avoid walking in the streets
- do not carry any suspicious-looking object, eg handbag, parcel, dog.

And, finally, do not stay in bed, as armed officers may well abseil through the window and shoot you through the head.

Issued by the combined police forces of the United Kingdom in the name of our new policy of zero tolerance, based on tolerating nobody.

REMEMBER
"It Could Be You"

Exclusive to Tory Newspapers
An Apology

IN RECENT weeks, in common with all other newspapers, we may have given the impression that Michael Portillo was a flamboyant and dangerous maverick who by his willingness to embrace not just dangerous liberal notions but also blokes meant that he'd proved himself unfit to be leader, and we told Tory MPs that it would be political suicide to put his name forward for the final ballot.

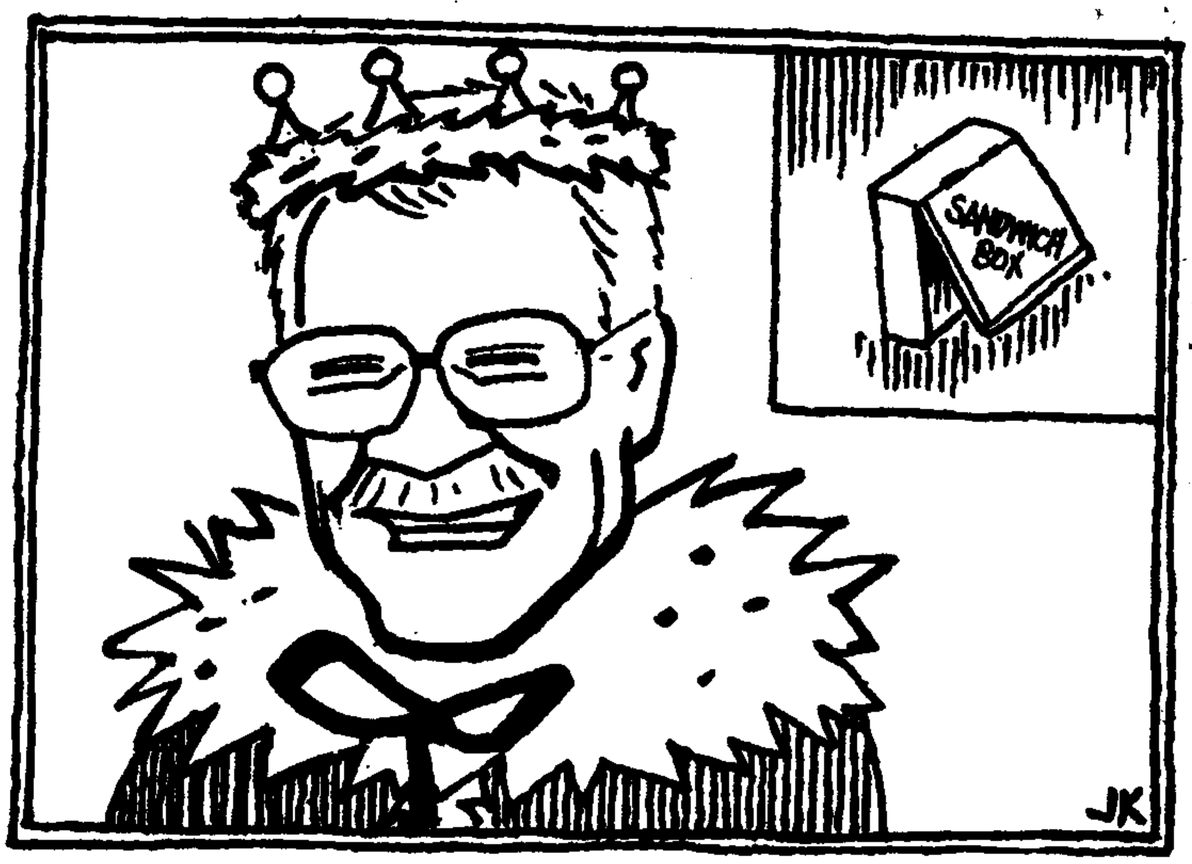
We now realise in the light of the Tory MPs not putting his name forward for the ballot, thus allowing Europhile Ken Clarke to win, that Michael Portillo is in fact a flamboyant and dangerous statesman, willing to embrace not just difficult radical reforms but also his wife Caroline, and failure to put his name forward was political suicide.

We apologise for any confusion, and any further confusion in the event that Ian Duncan Smith does win, and we urge him to distance himself from Michael Portillo, the flamboyant and dangerous maverick who... ***cont'd. p. 94***

TALES FRAE THE GORBALS

No. 94

The Story of Wee Angus Macdonald



MANY YEARS ago there dwelt in the town of Glasgow a humble shipwright's son whose name was Angus Macdonald, known far and wide as "Gus". From his earliest years, he was filled with a detestation of the cold-hearted forces of capitalism, and a mighty hatred of the rich and the powerful.

"When I become a man," wee Gus confided to his auld grannie, "I shall tear down the rotting fabric of the Establishment, so that the workers of the world can walk tall and inherit the earth.

"And above all," he said, his eyes burning with passion, "I shall smash that corrupt and tyrannical seat of privilege, the House of Lords."

But then the years rolled by, and wee Gus achieved his dream of power. He became the most trusted lieutenant of the prime minister, and a pillar of the Establishment.

He became one of the most powerful men in the land, and a scourge of the workers who, he said, must learn to come to terms with the idea that the bosses have a right to rule, and the employees have a duty to obey.

And for all this, wee Gus was asked to throw aside his humble jerkin and sandwich box, don a tiara and a robe of ermine, and take seat on the plush red leather benches of that much-respected seat of well-earned privilege, the House of Lords.

Moral: *If ye canna beat 'em, join 'em!*

DIARY

ANDREW RAWNSLEY'S
SERVANTS OF THE PEOPLE

Tony Blair was in the top flat in Downing Street, sitting on an off-white cushion on an olive-green settee purchased on the fourth day of the summer sale on July 12th 1995 from Habitat in Tottenham Court Road for a bargain £420, down from £750.

He was stirring a cup of coffee with all the cold fury he could muster. It had been one of those days – one of those menacing, broody days when the storm is followed by flash-flooding, and the dams threaten to burst like a thunderclap over the rising sun. A classic high-achiever, he was now well into his second term as Britain's Prime Minister – but still he found banana skins shutting in his face with a combustible combination of explosive pile-ups and toxic fall-out.

He stirred the coffee – white, no sugar, the way he liked it – so forcefully that one insider later recalled that "by the end, that cup of coffee was well and truly stirred – no question".* Suddenly, like a bolt from a greyhound released from the trap into a gale-force 8 storm, his grey trimphone began to ring like a banshee.

The troubled Blair reached for the phone with his right hand – the same hand he had used for tying up his shoelaces at 6.45am that morning. "Yes?" he barked, his voice riddled with an impatience born of a lack of patience.

It was Gordon Brown, his high-achieving Chancellor. Of the two men, Blair was wider but shallower, while Brown was deeper but narrower. Anyone wishing to swim underwater would have been well advised to dive into Brown first – but only after a firm warning that the currents can be dangerous. On the other hand, Blair has hidden trunks below his surface; it is all too possible to snag one's costume on a branch and emerge stark naked from a swim.

Swarthy as a black hole, Brown was a bubbling cauldron broth, full of high passions and brooding intensity.** Like Othello, he was not a man to forgive or forget. Far from it. Close friends recalled in hushed whispers how he had sent the Queen to Coventry after an imagined slight, forbidding anyone in his Private Office to speak to her ever again after she had shaken the Prime Minister's hand before his own at a private meeting in Buckingham Palace on June 2nd, 1998. After the ignominious meeting he vowed never to set eyes on her face again. Close friends maintain the Chancellor still presses stamps to letters and postcards with his eyes averted.***

"Gordon!" snapped Blair, his eyes blazing. Aides had never seen him stir his coffee with quite such smouldering resentment. Nescafe Gold Blend purchased in bulk from Tesco was now almost splashing out of the cup, onto the medium-sized saucer. It was as if everything that had ever gone wrong was now going even wronger than ever.

"I have some good news, Tony!" hissed Brown, his spite mixed with a resentment increased by loathing. "Sarah and I are having a baby."

Blair's eyes froze. His ears were pinned back, his nose set to explode, his tongue quivering with the scent of disaster. This was a bloodhound with its teeth poised inches from his neck. "A BABY?" he vibrated.

"Correct!" darted Gordon, kicking off a shoe. He took a size 9 and a half,**** half a size higher than his Cabinet colleague and bitter rival Jack Straw.

"That's great news, Gordon!" exploded Blair. His coffee cup could take the strain no more. Years of fear and hatred bit deep into its heart. But the cup refused to break. It would not yet shatter into smithereens, its hideously broken shards sucked into orbit like nuclear fall-out over the ochre Wolsey carpet, 72% natural fibres. "When's it due?"

Downstairs, the high-achieving Alastair Campbell sat chisel-faced on a chair, his face riddled with mistrust. His brain had gone into overdrive as he had slammed it into first gear and then straight into fourth, cutting out the second gear and even third in hot pursuit of his boundless ambition.

A cloud of discontent had hung over his afternoon like a bucket of water strategically placed on a half-open door ready to fall like an avalanche of hungry wasps over a tidal wave of hyenas. At 10.12 that morning, alarm bells had begun to ring.

What was it? What WAS it?

Yes: he had forgotten to switch off his alarm clock. And now his telephone – first invented by sharp-witted high-achieving Alexander Graham Bell in 1876 – was ringing too.

Mired in a slurry of phone rings and finding himself unable to douse them, Campbell was to take the only course open to him. With a decisive – some onlookers would describe it as brutal, others as merely courageous – movement of his hand, he picked it up.

"Alastair Campbell!" he said. It was the name he had been given by his parents within weeks of his birth. It was the name he had called himself ever since.*****

"It's Tony!" barked the voice. Quick as a razor-sharp heat-seeking missile, Campbell mentally scanned his memory reserves like an eagle scanning the horizon for a toxic whale. And then he knew for sure: it was Tony Blair, the Prime Minister.

"Gordon and Sarah are having a baby," rasped Blair, his mouth opening and shutting as the words poured out uncontrollably, like snakes into a gaping wound.

It was the cannonball Campbell had always dreaded swimming into view.

In Beijing it was 0200 hours and Transport Minister Deng Mui-Xian was tossing and turning in his sleep.

In Peru, it was 0800 hours: veteran Opposition Leader Alfonso Gonzalez was chewing on a slim panatella before dining on some of the finest cuisine his ill-fated country had to offer.

But in Downing Street, it was 1100 hours, and the Prime Minister's right-hand man stared back at the BT phone with an unease bordering perilously close to uneasiness. No, it wasn't going to be easy. Not for him. Not for Tony. Not for Gordon. And certainly not for the baby.

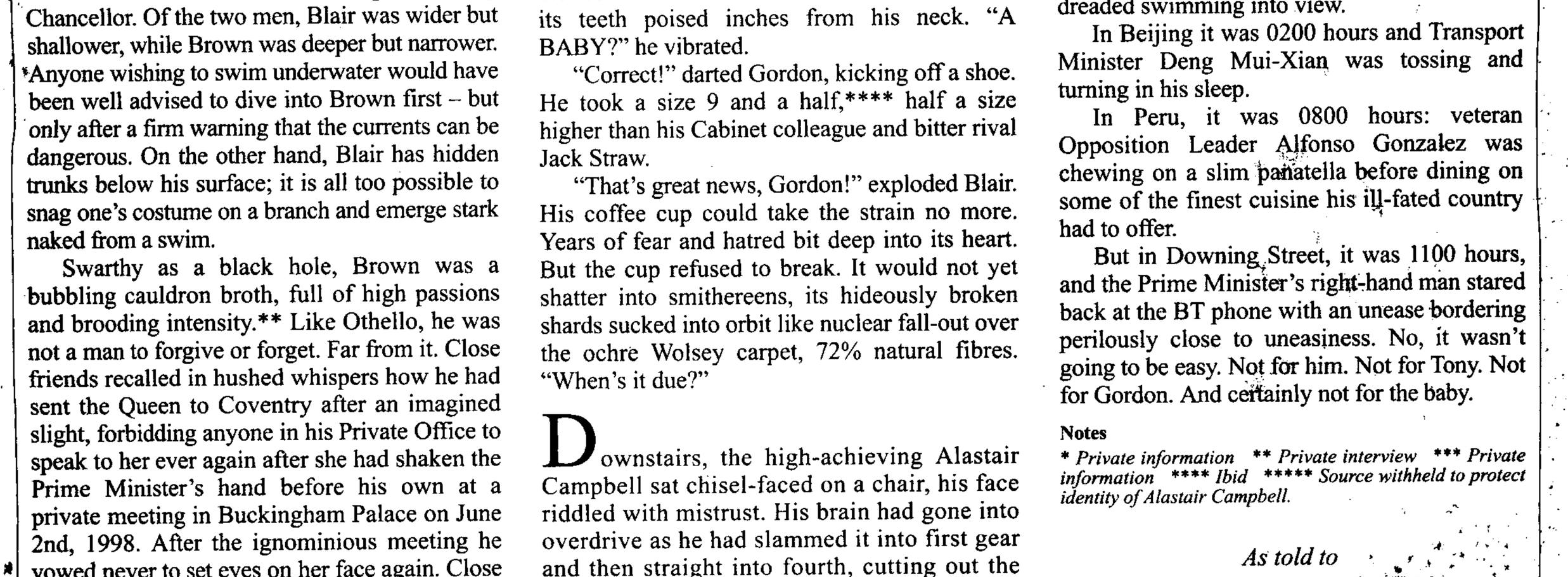
Notes

** Private information ** Private interview *** Private information **** Ibid ***** Source withheld to protect identity of Alastair Campbell.*

As told to
CRAIG BROWN

Celeb

LIGGER


DROP YOUR LEFT SHOULDER A TOUCH, PLEASE...
OKAY... SIGH
LOOK SLIGHTLY TO YOUR LEFT.
SIGH OKAY...
AND I WONDER IF YOU'D MIND RAISING YOUR PROFILE A BIT.
SURE.
SHALL I BEAT YOU UP OR THROW THE CANVAS OUT THE WINDOW?
ER...

Literary Review

Jack booted

Twenty-One: The Best of Granta Magazine
Edited by Ian Jack
(Granta Books, £9.99)

IF YOU WANTED to set a date at which contemporary English literature could be said properly to have taken shape, a good candidate would be the autumn of 1981. The late Malcolm Bradbury was chairing the Booker panel, Ian McEwan's *The Comfort of Strangers* and D. M. Thomas's *The White Hotel* were on the shortlist, and the winner was a novel by a hitherto deeply obscure Indian writer name Salman Rushdie. From the point of view of staid old Englit, it was as if a bomb had gone off. Suddenly Kingsley Amis, Iris Murdoch and Margaret Drabble were dead in the water and names like Graham Swift, Timothy Mo and Julian Barnes started exploding out of the firmament. The literary agents and the publicity brokers set to work and for the first time in a quarter of a century, fiction was sexy.

By chance an extract from Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* had already appeared in a hitherto deeply obscure Cambridge literary journal named *Granta*. Over the next few years there were to be a whole lot more of those extracts: from Mart, Julian, Kaz, Graham and all the other bygone heroes. Wherever you look on the roster of boost and counter-boost that made up the literary '80s, *Granta*, under the watchful gaze of its brooding American editor Bill Buford, was there. The 1983 *Best of Young British Novelists* promotion? It was Bill's original idea. The "Dirty Realism" stuff? Bill thought of it first. The fuss about *Money*? You know where to go.

Throughout the 1980s, with Bill at the tiller, and supporting roles played by, well, Salman, Mart, Julian and the others, *Granta* kept up an unrelenting and two-pronged theoretical line. Most of it was encapsulated in Bill's first editorial, which current editor Ian Jack obligingly quotes in his introduction to *Twenty-One*. Old-style Britlit "of the Fifties, Sixties, and even much of the Seventies... lacks excellence, wants drive, provides comfort not challenge." The good stuff is – you guessed it – being written on the other side of the pond. Goodbye Kingsley and Iris. Welcome Raymond (Carver) and Richard (Ford).

And to be fair to Bill and his wide-eyed cohorts, he had a point. The degeneracy of home-grown English fiction at the turn of the '80s is a critical commonplace. Ditto the excellence of much of what was spawning in the American mid-West. And yet it could be argued – should be argued – that for all the tip-top material it published (see extracts here from James Fenton, Norman Douglas and others) *Granta*'s influence on the literary scene during the 1980s was almost wholly malign. It was almost wholly malign because in seeking to displace one tired old coterie from the English literary boardroom it ended up replacing them with an equally tired old coterie, none of whose ornaments has really produced anything for about 15 years. Ask yourself. When did Mart last write a decent novel? The answer is *Money*, back in 1984, but that didn't stop a special work-in-progress issue when *The Information* was fermenting 10 years later.

As for the Yanks, "Dirty Realism" 15 years on simply looks like a marketing tool for getting us interested in Raymond and Richard. Anyone who can remember any of the second lot of Dirty Realists, plucked from the Buford hat sometime in the '90s, is entitled to some kind of prize. Historically, of course, most of *Granta*'s failings are par for the course. All respectable 20th-century literary magazines, from Cyril Connolly's *Horizon* to Ian Hamilton's *New Review* have made a virtue out of their cliqueishness. None, though, was quite so impervious to new talent as Bill in his pomp. Literary magazines, it cannot be too firmly stated, have a duty to publish stuff by promising unknowns as well as the pieces that get forwarded to them by the publicity departments of messrs Jonathan Cape and Faber & Faber. Ask how many manuscripts Bill picked off the unsolicited pile during the lifetime of one editorial assistant who later communicated her observations to a novelist chum of mine and the answer is, er, *none*.

Twenty-One: The Best of Granta Magazine charts the reliable decline of a rumbustious reputation fixer into a much staider kind of literary institution. The good stuff is nearly all in the first half (Carver, Gordimer, Fenton, etc) with recent offerings extending only to a paragraph or three about spanking by Harold Pinter and a not especially scintillating recreation of marital break-up courtesy of Tim Lott. It's not Ian Jack's fault – merely the way in which literary magazines flow and ebb. Meanwhile, the literary historian who sits down to write his history of post-1980 English lit will have a splendid time, both with this anthology and the piles of back-numbers, establishing the nature of the confidence trick that Bill pulled on the reading public. Mart, Salman, Ian, Jules, Kaz and co. – we know now that, with occasional exceptions, their careers peaked years ago. Back then, under Bill's spirited tutelage, buffeted by the proud claims and the razzmatazz, it was harder to tell.

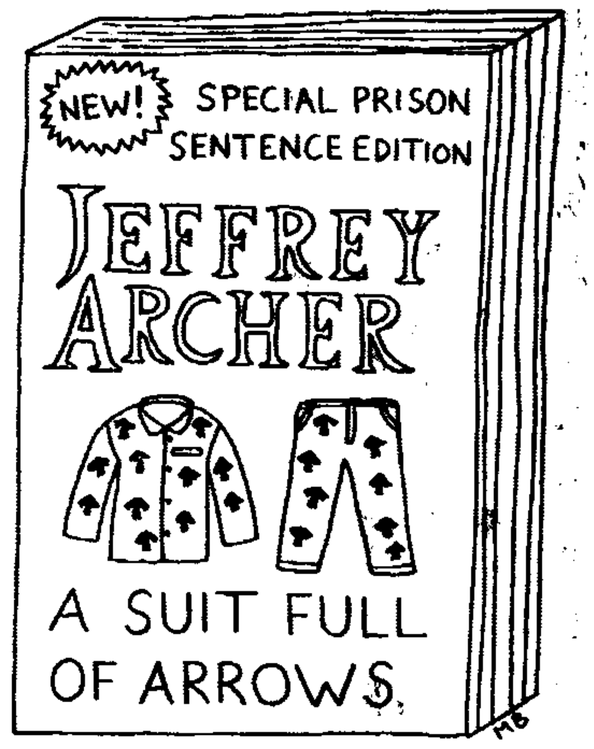
Books & Bookmen

■ WHENCE Nicolas Blincoe's scorn in his *New Statesman* review of Weidenfeld and Nicolson's anthology *England Calling*?

"All I want to do is sit down and be as rude as possible, for as long as possible," he flounced, going on to describe Julia Bell and Jackie Gay's collection as "the University of East Anglia's creative writing department calling a few friends and writing a begging letter to Julie Burchill".

Blincoe can't see the point of the effort, because "anthologies sell so badly that the only way of having a hope in hell of shifting even a couple of thousand copies is to make a wild claim on the cover and then sprinkle enough well-known writers throughout to pique the interest of the casual browser".

Well, Blincoe should know – he followed this prescription to



the letter with his own "rewriting the rules of fiction" anthology for *All Hail The New Puritans*, which he takes the opportunity to plug at length here. When the book was published last year, one reviewer, writing in *The Big Issue*, described the collection as "a self-consciously soulless, bland, white limbo of slightly surreal stories that neither surprise or inspire", and went on to describe Blincoe as a "cock".

Who was this "rude as possible" critic? One Julia Bell, of the University of East Anglia's creative writing department. Are the two reviews by any chance related?

■ THE FIRST major departure from Fourth Estate since its subsumation into HarperCollins has occurred with Victoria Barnsley's de facto number two, sales and marketing director Stephen Page, moving to become chief executive of Faber and Faber. The big question is why the Faber job took so long to fill. Page's predecessor Toby Faber exited in February, saying that the administrative burden was distracting him from the books side of the business. However, some have suggested that it was more a case of being tired of living in chairman Matthew Evans's shadow.

So, could candidates have been put off by the likelihood of interference from Milord Evans? Certainly he stepped in as interim chief exec a little too readily when young Mr Toby departed. Page, however, has been given reassurances that Evans will now be very much a non-executive chairman.

Whatever Evans' interventions, Page won't have to do much to be more popular than the departed Toby. Previously a business consultant, Faber was brought into the family firm as a hatchet man, a job he carried out with gusto. As well as flogging Faber's US subsidiary, he closed the company's warehouse at Harlow, making many staff redundant. However, his crowning glory came at the end of last year, when he upset John Osborne's widow by demanding the return of the advance for the last volume of Osbum's memoirs, the playwright having had the temerity to die before finishing the manuscript. Why this sum - understood to be in the low five-

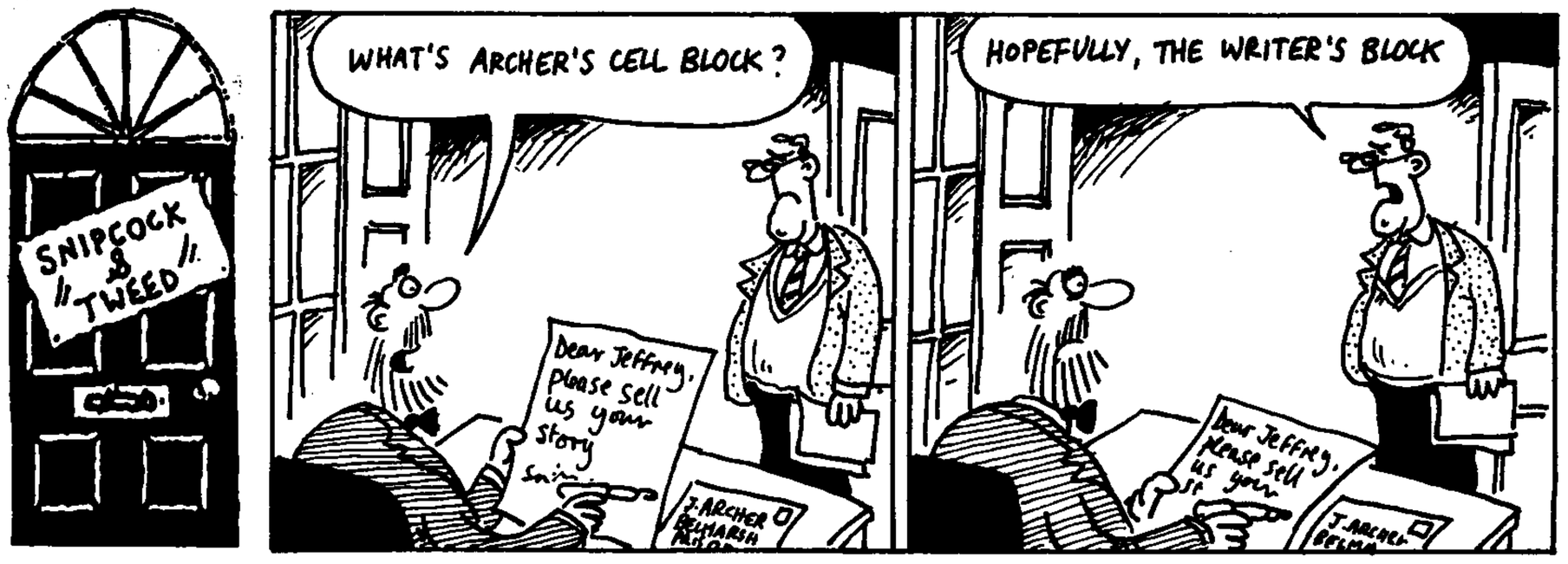


figure range - suddenly became critical to the company's financial well-being six years after Osbum's demise is unclear.

■ IS ALL WELL at the business publisher Texere? The company was founded in March 2000 by American husband and wife team Myles and Lee Thompson, both ex-John Wiley, with former Orion business books chief Martin Liu. It was launched with a lavish party, a hefty stack of capital from the Baltic Exchange-demolishing Swiss insurance firm Swiss Re, and Liu's rather impressive Orion list, purchased from Anthony "Fatty" Cheetham in one of his more cash-strapped periods.

With a list of authors such as investment sage Warren Buffett and "Changi" Jim Slater, all was set fair for success. However, after barely a year, Liu left. His departure was not announced formally. Talk from those who have seen the Thompsons in action is that they have consistently overpaid for every title acquired, often entering rights auctions with opening bids higher than the final expected price. The recent lunch party to celebrate the company's first year, no less lavish than the launch do, can't have helped matters. The decision to split head office functions between New York and London has proved expensive, too. As a result, the Swiss money is running very low. Perhaps the Thompsons should call on Slater for some advice?

■ HAVING almost pulled itself apart over a £7m advance royalty windfall from Disney, literary agency Curtis Brown is now on the verge of being bought out by its senior management, including MD Jonathan Lloyd. On the face of it, Lloyd's position in the bid is only to be expected, but insiders have indicated that the buyout was originally put together by a group of agents headed by Nick Marston, head of the theatre, film and media division, who wanted primarily to get away from their domineering MD. So, how has he managed to muscle in? Having come up through the Eddie Bell school of bullying at HarperCollins, anything is possible. Lloyd is also an assiduous luncher of other agents' clients, most famously Jilly Cooper, who was poached by Curtis Brown from Desmond Elliott.

WHAT YOU DIDN'T MISS, Pt 94

A Son of War
Melvyn Bragg
(Sceptre, £16.99)

SKIPPING over the open sewer that ran down the middle of the street, palm clenched hotly around the silver threepenny bit he'd found in his aunt Sylvia's Christmas pudding, young Melvyn rounded the corner to the family house. The lit windows of 14 The Hovels, Wigton, shone invitingly at him. "Ee lad, there's nowt to warm tha like a champion fire to thee grate," his father had often said. Pausing only to wave to old Silas McTavish, who stood at his gate cheerfully exposing himself to the small children who played in the yard, he darted through the front door. It was grand up here, up north, with these warm-hearted Cumbrian folk, he thought.

In the front room his mother was doing the ironing. From the tearful look on her face he knew that she'd found another dead rat in the overflow pipe while cleaning the outside privy. But northern people got stuck in. That was what they did. They might become peers of the realm or well-loved media personalities, but they got stuck in. His father sat reading the *News Chronicle*, listening to *Family Favourites*, smoking Players' Weights and doing all the other things that people did in the late 1940s.

Sam looked up. "Where have you been our Melvyn?" he asked accusingly.

His mother moved swiftly in to support him. "Now then, Sam. He's been to his piano lesson with Miss Fotherington-Posh. Like we agreed."

"You'll be turning him into a lass if you go on like this." He turned to his son. "And what's thee been doing to tha hair?"

"Honestly daddy. It just grows this way."

"There's nothing wrong with his hair". Ellen was defiant now. That was what northern people did. They got defiant about their children's hair. It was a wonderful feeling, this defiance. "Besides, I want him to make something of his life."

"Make summat of his life? There's a job waiting for him at Carlisle sewage works any time he likes."

"No. Something *proper*. Like, well, a highly respected TV arts presenter, or a best-selling novelist."

Melvyn could see his father staring at him intently. "Well, just you promise me one thing, young Melvyn. Wherever you go and whatever you do, always remember where you come from."

In his mind's eye he could see the white surface of the ermine stretching out towards him. Soft. Yielding. "I'll remember daddy."

Outside the warm reek of excrement rose into the night sky. Above, the cheery northern stars looked on.

EXCLUSIVE: PRESIDENT VISITS BRITISH LIBRARY

Pseuds Corner

Andrew Motion, Here to Eternity
Poems arranged in a series of concentric rings to give an impression of an expanding universe: self, home, town, work, land, love, travel, war, belief and space.

***Bookseller* autumn highlights**

The hair on my crown persists in standing up on end. Has this a health connection? Petunia
It indicates an excess of energy ascending through your main energy conduit that runs up the spine and is responsible for maintaining the overall 'yang' of your body – the energy responsible for keeping you upright. Other than using a firmer-hold gel or wax, oriental medicine would treat this (if at all) by pulling any excess energy back down the channel. This would be done by stimulating an acupuncture point in the centre of your perineum (between the anus and the genitals). Try massaging there every day and perhaps gradually your hair will settle down.

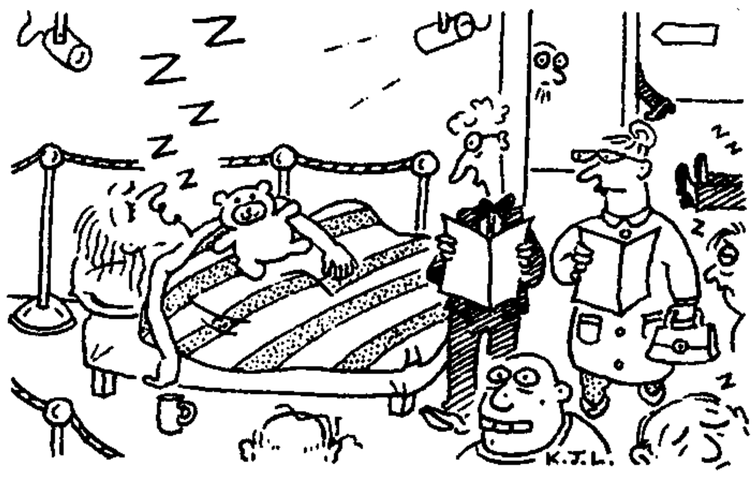
The 'Barefoot Doctor', *Observer*

ACHIEVEMENT AND INCLUSION STRATEGY GROUP
You will be aware from discussions in your strategy group that a merger of all the School Improvement and Achievement and Inclusion Strategy Groups would be implemented once the School Improvement Strategy Group had dealt with immediate priorities related to school improvement. The longer term strategic work on school improvement will be included in the remit of the new merged Strategy Group.

A further development has been the decision, agreed by all strategy groups, that the new Achievement and Inclusion Strategy Group would merge with the Vision and Values Strategy Group. The new strategy group would absorb the visionary functions of the Vision and Values Strategy Group and act as a steering group for all the Strategy Groups.

Letter sent to headteachers by Bradford council's OFSTED Action Team

A teenage art student today turned part of her life into art for her college show by sleeping in her bed installed in a gallery.



Katherine Hymers, 18, will be a living exhibit at the Market Cross Gallery in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, for the next four days...

Katherine said: "I have begun to realise that the process of my work is more important than the final product.

"There need be no final product. My work is about me, it's about searching and struggling.

"I am doing this, I am becoming my art, because I can't escape it; if I tried not to do it I would crave it; it's a compulsion so I have to do it. Even if it means I am doing nothing for my art, the nothing will be my art. And it will also be the guilt of doing nothing and the frustration because it doesn't feel valid."

Metro

Like Apollo, Morrison represents youth, love and poetry. The marijuana is the incense of today. The scribbled notes are votive offerings.

Perhaps it was just like this that some beautiful harpist from the Aegean was trans-formed via the collective memory into a godhead.

And in Paris, beneath the graffiti-strewn slab, the candles and the fading blooms, lies not the decaying body of an alcohol-raddled narcissist, but an idea of perfection – as ancient as human life itself.

BBC Online on the 30th anniversary of Jim Morrison's death

If revisiting all this older male sexual stuff sounds rather laborious, let's just say it is worth reading, if only for those Roth sentences which have the clarity of purpose and elastic muscularity of famished serpents.

SEBASTIAN SMEE (reviewing Philip Roth's new novel), *The Spectator*

CONTRIBUTORS: Strobes, Simon Hampson, John Roberts, Eugene Costello, Clive Jones, Michael Grosvenor Myer.

£10 paid for entries

IN THE BACK

Sussex all at sea

THE SACKING by home secretary David Blunkett of Paul Whitehouse as chief constable of Sussex was greeted with relief by the family of James Ashley, who was shot dead while naked by Sussex officers who forced their way into his bedroom in January 1998. Blunkett's prompt action, however, may not have cleared up all the problems Mr Whitehouse left behind him.

The *Eye* has seen an internal Sussex police document compiled nearly two years ago by detective superintendent Tim Godwin and detective sergeant Mark Taylor. It is a report "into the investigation of the conduct and behaviour of Ray McBurney, force finance director". The report starts with an expression of "sadness":

"This may sound melodramatic, but it is a feeling truly held about the current situation at headquarters in relation to the interaction between departments and divisions and the treatment of individuals within departments." After conceding that Mr McBurney is a technically competent and visionary officer, the report continues: "There is also a view that he presides over one of the most inefficient departments in Sussex police at present." There was, for instance, "confusion and lack of clarity about the financial situation". McBurney himself was "frequently absent from the office and inaccessible to staff". His bullying "management style undermines his own ability and his staff's ability to deliver". Moreover, "he is perceived by those that have suffered from his intolerance that he is a sarcastic, arrogant man, egotistical and self-important". There was "no evidence of a lack of integrity" but, in the absence of the assistant chief constable, McBurney had "inherited a status and power base that arguably exceeds that of force finance director".

Whitehouse: legacy

The result of this report was that Mr McBurney was reinstated from suspension, and returned to work in triumph. The officers who had made complaints about him were systematically moved or sidelined. Almost as soon as his report was submitted, Tim Godwin was snapped up by the Metropolitan Police, and is now a deputy assistant commissioner in charge of all the London divisions. McBurney meanwhile was promoted to be the first chief finance officer of the new home office probation service.

The *Eye* asked Sussex police:

- How many, if any. of the report's recommendations were carried out?
- Was the Godwin report made available to the Probation Service when Mr McBurney applied for a job there?
- Is there anything in the suggestion that the Godwin report was shelved without effective action by Sussex police and that Mr McBurney was effectively cleared of the charges made against him in the report?

To these very reasonable questions, the *Eye* received a mysterious reply:

"Having passed your request through to those with knowledge, Sussex police can confirm that Ray McBurney was formerly the force finance director. We are not prepared to discuss the matters that you ask."

Sentenced to death

IN ONE of his most scathing reports ever the chief inspector of prisons, Sir David "Rambo" Ramsbotham, felt obliged to apologise for not exposing earlier the atrocious and dangerous conditions under which young people were being held in Brinsford young offenders jail in Wolverhampton.

He found "a level of neglect and lack of understanding of the needs of young prisoners" that was "breathtaking". He concluded that the regime, with its inmate-on-inmate bullying, climate of fear and levels of self harm "puts most of its juvenile population at risk".

Rambo had visited the jail after five young inmates had hanged themselves in the space of seven months.

Last month an inquest jury hearing the circumstances surrounding the death of one of those teenagers, David Henderson, echoed Rambo's words, and recorded a verdict of "accidental death aggravated by neglect". Henderson, 18, and serving five months for "taking and driving away" had fashioned a noose from his cell sheet and hanged himself – the last desperate act of a victim of the bullying that Rambo had identified in the jail. He had been threatened, spat at, and had property stolen. Henderson had already taken an overdose and had threatened go on hunger strike. He had been prescribed anti-depressants by medical staff who were aware of his "low mood", but the inquest heard of a lack of liaison between medical staff and wing staff responsible for his care. His father had rung the jail twice to express his concern about the effect the bullying was having on his son's health – all, it seems, to no effect.

The prison maintained it had a "zero-tolerance" anti-bullying regime, which looked good on paper. But there was no evidence that it was ever applied to help Henderson – either in terms of dealing with the bullies or in effective support for him. Indeed, many of the staff did not know what the policy was.

Earlier this year another inquest jury damned Brinsford by finding that Stuart Green, 19, who hanged himself a few days before Henderson, had died as a result of "misadventure contributed to by neglect".

The new governor of Brinsford, Danny McAllister, shipped into the jail a few days after Henderson's death, said after last month's inquest that he was confident that another report from Rambo, due to be published soon, would show it had been "transformed".

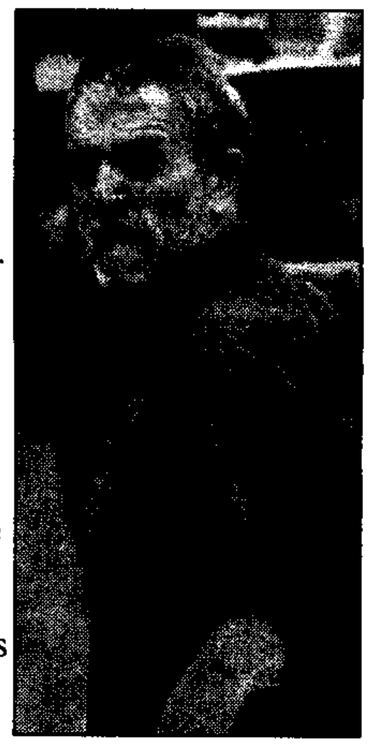
And indeed he was right. Rambo on his visit to the jail last May found "a totally changed atmosphere" and "safer and better cared for young prisoners". He praised McAllister and his team for the on-going revolution.

Except that in February this year 16-year-old Anthony Redding, another joy rider, hanged himself in his cell after making numerous previous attempts on his life. It will be up to another inquest jury later this year to decide whether better care in Brinsford would have saved his life – or whether such an obviously vulnerable teenager should ever have been sent to jail in the first place.

Lees majesty

LAST month (*Eye* 1031) we revealed the downside of giving headteachers more control over their budgets. Brian Lees, head of Glossopdale community school in Derbyshire, had mis-used school funds in spectacular fashion over 11 years, including getting the school to pay for £38,528 of goods which were used by his family, and spending £256,000 trying to turn one school building into a conference centre.

Now it transpires that the wretched Lees downloaded thousands of pornographic images on to a PC when he should have been, in the words of the official report, "carrying out his duties as headteacher". His "toolbar favorites" included "College Babe Series", "Teens Online", "Anal Sex Free Thumbnail", "Club Seventeen – Exclusive Daily Teen Hardcore", "The FREE Teen galleries", "Lesbian Gallery", "20 Hot Porno Pics" and "Hardcore XXX-pictures". In all, more than 2,000 porn images were downloaded. What a busy headmaster! Lees's wife, Jean, says her husband was "a sick man who needs help rather than punishment". Hmmm.



Lees: porn fan

Derbyshire county council's audit revealed a systematic pillaging of the school budget over more than a decade: IT equipment, digital cameras and mobile phones for family use; double claims for car repairs, mileage claimed while on family visits. Nobody noticed – not the governors, not the local authority. It was missed by Ofsted, which did, however, manage to pick up on a lack of computers in the school (state-of-the-art IT equipment had been diverted to the Lees household). Daughter Amy had a university biology text book costing £241 paid out of school funds.

Lees has continued to enjoy the enthusiastic support of senior governors, as well as his Labour MP, Tom Levitt, a former NUT chair. Former teaching staff, however, paint Lees not as a misunderstood weakling who let the responsibilities of office get too much for him, but as a bully who stalked the school corridors checking on staff timekeeping. One woman teacher was upbraided so violently for being late to a class after dealing with another matter that she refused ever to attend a meeting with Lees again unless accompanied by a male member of staff. A maths teacher who disagreed with Lees found himself pinned against a wall.

When Lees's financial meddling threatened to spiral out of control, he attempted to balance the books by making six teachers redundant. Redundancy notices were posted by the LEA, who agreed to fund voluntary early retirement deals (VERs). Then someone in the council's audit department woke up, and spotted a problem. The VERs were withdrawn, but too late to save good staff from the stresses and anxieties of their situation. The school was disrupted and lost several science teachers, and now finds that it can't recruit replacements.

Lees – still drawing his £66,000 salary despite being suspended for more than a year – was allowed to continue on his way. Now his wife and friends among the governors plead for just the kind of consideration and sympathy the errant head denied his hapless staff.

Lockerbie: don't ask Lord Ignorance

PRESIDENT George W. Bush has found just the man to take over control at the scandal-hit FBI. He is Robert Mueller, the FBI man in charge of the prosecution of two Libyans for the Lockerbie bombing. The *Daily Telegraph* reported on 6 July: "He was delighted at the conviction earlier this year of one of the two Libyan intelligence against whom he helped to bring charges."

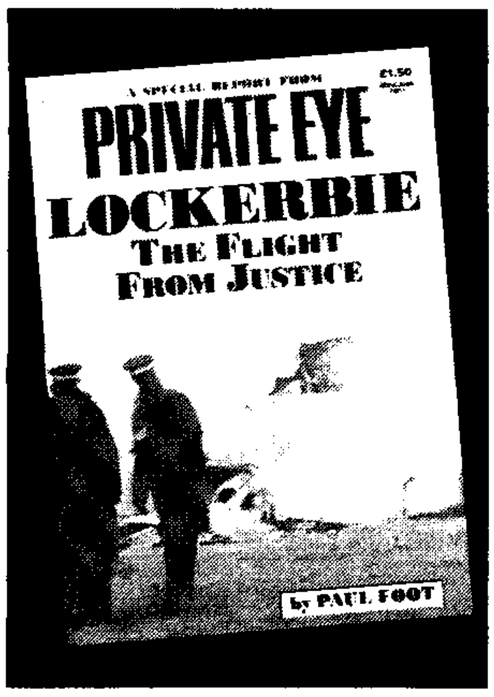
Four facts must have been chiefly responsible for Mueller's delight.

1. One of the two defendants, not an intelligence agent, was acquitted.

2. The other was plainly innocent (see the *Eye* pamphlet *Lockerbie – The Flight from Justice*).

3. The chief witness for the prosecution was proved a liar, and was paid for his lies by the US justice department.

4. The suspect forensic evidence against the Libyans was "discovered" – and probably invented – by a senior FBI official with a record of evidence fabrication. He was crucial to the prosecution case but was not called.



***Eye* report: exposed failings**

On 25 June, Martin Cadman whose son Bill died aged 32 on Pan-Am 103 at Lockerbie, wrote to Lord Boyd, Scottish lord advocate, complaining that the questions which mattered to him and his family about Bill's death had not been answered at the recent trial in Holland or at the fatal accident inquiry in Scotland in 1990. Instead, the trial "did show some failings of the British / Scottish legal system" many of which, he added, were exposed in the *Private Eye* pamphlet; and in the book *Lockerbie, Cover-Up of Convenience* by John Ashton and Ian Ferguson.

It took nearly a month to get a reply out of John Logue, a civil servant in the Lockerbie criminal case team in the lord advocate's department. Mr Logue's letter was full of the evasions and inaccuracies that have historically distinguished the responses from the lord advocate to families bereaved at Lockerbie. "The lord advocate" he announced proudly, "has not read the edition of *Private Eye* or the book to which you refer" (the pamphlet was not "an edition" of the *Eye*, but a separate publication). The next sentence was even more remarkable. "He (Lord Boyd) does not in any event consider it appropriate to offer any comment on such publications." Could that be because the arch-Blairite Boyd is, in any event, too high and mighty to respond to public criticism?

Estate of chaos

IN THE dark days before New Labour, NHS estates was a small and efficient agency dealing with the disposal of surplus NHS land and property, and providing consultancy work for new NHS projects. It made a decent surplus, which rose from £98,000 in 1997-98, when chief executive Kate Priestley took over, to £366,000 last year.

Its problem, as far as health ministers and their business friends were concerned, was that it was wholly-owned by the NHS, and its surplus went straight back into the health service. Not a penny of profit was made by any private company or entrepreneur. One result (and one of the chief explanations for the agency's success), was relatively low charges for consultancy work.

All this obviously had to stop. It was clearly time for fuddy-duddy public enterprise to give way once more to PPP (public private partnership). No sooner was health secretary Alan Milburn back in his office after the election than he announced that NHS estates were looking for private bidders to share in their enterprise. Staff were circulated with a list of questions and answers, which has filled most of them with foreboding. For example:

Q: "How can staff influence the choice of partner?"

A: "The staff will have an opportunity at a later date to meet with potential partners."

Q: "Will there be a significant increase in charge-out rates for the consultants?"

A: "Other organisations in the market have higher charge-out rates than NHS estates fund. The new entity needs to make the maximum profit by having a higher charge-out rate. The charge-out rates will be brought in line with the private sector."

Q: "What will happen to existing contracts with the trusts?"

A: "All current agreements will be novated" (a new Labour word meaning "re-written").

Q: "Is there not a conflict of interest in the process being undertaken?"

A: "The potential conflict of interest was identified at an early stage and that is why the chief executive of NHS estates (Kate Priestley) stepped aside to become the chief executive officer of NHS trading fund, the shadow organisation."

Priestley: success

Anxious NHS estates staff have a number of questions arising from these answers.

Q: How does the stepping aside – and renaming – of the chief executive responsible for the public agency's success cope with the real conflict of interest involved: between private profit and a public health service?

Q: How is the new PPP going to win new consultancy business if it has to demand higher charges to meet the profit requirements of its new private partner?

Q: Will the new arrangement lead to the usual exorbitant remuneration for executives?

Q: Above all, why is the new PPP being formed at all?

Not even a glimmer of a satisfactory answer has been given to any of these (and many other) questions. Instead, a rather grim piece of news is that 140 greedy firms have "expressed an interest" in the new PPP. These include all the usual suspects so familiar to *Eye* readers: Crapita, Serco, EDS, W S Atkins, etc, etc…

State washes hands of 'private' prisoners

IN A REMARKABLE judgement which will bring joy to Labour's privatisation enthusiasts, Mr Justice Wright has ruled that once the government has contracted out the management of a service – in this case an immigration detention centre – then it can't be held responsible for any harm or wrong that the private contractors do.

The decision, which went all but unnoticed – a mere four paragraphs tucked away in *The Times*'s law reports – came in the long-running saga of Ghanaian asylum-seeker John Quaquah, who is claiming damages for malicious prosecution, after he was wrongly made a scapegoat for the 1997 disturbances at the privately run Campsfield House detention centre near Oxford. The trial of Mr Quaquah and eight others on riot charges spectacularly collapsed after surveillance video evidence completely contradicted the accounts given by the guards.

Mr Justice Wright struck out Quaquah's claim against the home secretary, saying that once the minister had contracted out the management of Campsfield, he had also delegated his duties – and therefore he was not liable for any wrong-doing on the part of Group 4.

It has – until now – always been the duty of the state to take reasonable care of the health and welfare of prisoners and other detainees. Privatisation of incarceration and other state functions is relatively new to the UK and there is therefore a dearth of law on the issue. The judge was no doubt applying the usual tests for "vicarious" liability and independent contractors – more usually found in property law.

But can it be right for the state to absolve itself from responsibility for harm committed by its private managers, or agents, to people who are only exposed to that danger because the state put them there in the first place? If that is the case then it is difficult to see any area where the government could be held liable – from prisons to failing schools, rail networks and hospitals.

Bhatt Murphy, the solicitors acting for Mr Quaquah, are considering an appeal, but there are two barriers – the first is that Quaquah is not being denied redress: he can and will pursue Group 4. The second is that any damages he might win against Group 4 might be lost to the home office should he pursue the difficult and thus uncharted territory and – although it hard to conceive – lose.

But in this era of privatisation the ruling is of huge public and constitutional importance and it should not be left to a helpless and penniless asylum seeker to clarify the law – especially as he has, until late last week, been battling on another front to stay in the country to pursue his claim.

For the past two years Jack Straw had been refusing Mr Quaquah leave to enter the country – despite two High Court judges telling him in no uncertain terms that he should do so unless there were strong countervailing reasons that outweighed Mr Quaquah's civil rights. At the last hearing nearly a year ago the judge, Mr Justice Elias, made it clear that he had come very close to awarding punitive costs against Straw.

But two months later, Straw again refused Quaquah leave without giving any reasonable "countervailing" arguments and Quaquah's lawyers had again to return to court. But this time David Blunkett, Straw's successor, clearly saw the writing on the wall and knew that the courts would not give the Home Office a third chance. Last Thursday Mr Quaquah was finally given leave to enter for a year to pursue the case.

You can contact Paul Foot on 020 7287 3183 or the In the Back team on 020 7437 4017

In the City

FIRST it was the news that the bearded wonder was putting his airline in hock to Lloyds TSB to borrow a mere £70m or so. Then the Branson bank, Virgin One, was up for sale to Royal Bank of Scotland for £100m, to be divided with Aussie partners AMP. Now the highly profitable Virgin Megastore chain in France is up for sale for another £100m. All at once Richard Branson seems to be in need of cash, lots of cash and fast.

The Virgin PR machine of course trumpets that all this cash is simply to fund further worldwide expansion of the Branson empire and image. But with the trans-Atlantic economies – the Virgin heartland – heading south and banks showing a reluctance to lend unsecured given the losses they are daily facing from dot.com and telecom loans it would be no surprise if the money-eating habits of so many Virgin ventures were starting to make their presence felt.

Take for example Branson's bid to re-enter the music business. His V2 Music group has recently published its latest results for the year to June 2000 – no Branson company ever reports promptly. These show just what a strain such ambitions place on a private business, even one run by a supposed double billionaire.

Sales last year for the top company V2 Music (Holdings) rose £10m to more than £45m. Operating losses were cut from £38m to £22m. But so large are V2's borrowings and so expensive, requiring refinancing a year ago, that interest charges soared £6m to almost £18m. Also £12m had to be written off loans to other V2 companies. As a result the group loss was down from only £48m to £40.5m. Total V2 losses now exceed £143m.

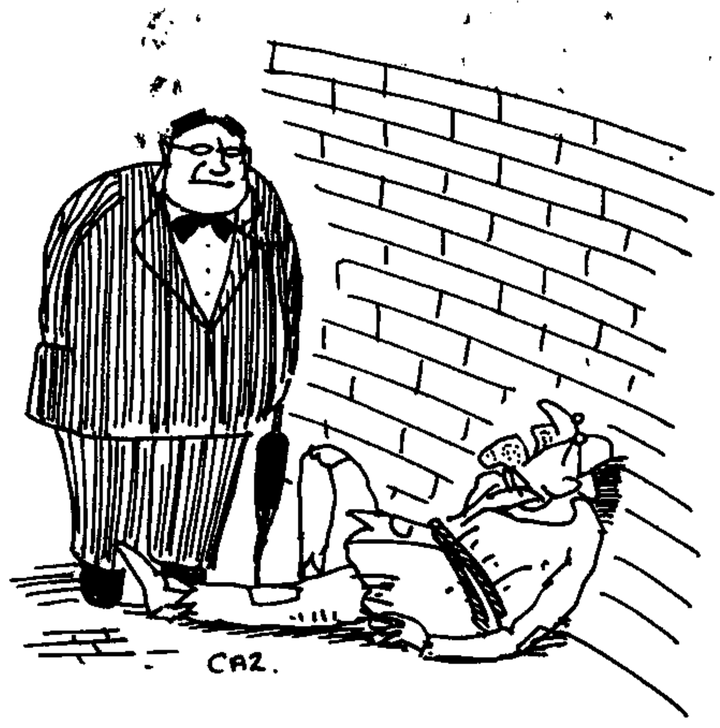
These are almost totally reliant for financing on borrowings from other Virgin companies or from outside investors. During the year net debt rose by more than 50 percent from £61m to just under £100m. Almost all that increase came from elsewhere in the Branson empire with a loan of £34m made post his sale of a half interest in Virgin Atlantic Airlines to Singapore Airlines.

That £34m was due to be repaid within a year – ie by now – but we will not know until next year whether it was, or how. Another £68m is the result of the June 2000 refinancing and is not due for repayment before 2012, four years later than the cheaper borrowings it replaced.

In 1998 when Branson launched V2 in typically optimistic style he raised £25m and $81m to finance his music comeback by issuing deep discounted sterling and dollar notes due to be repaid in 2008, tied to warrants converting into V2 shares. Interest at 14 percent accrued from 2002.

But last year these costly notes were repaid by being replaced by guaranteed exchangeable notes issued by a new Luxembourg Virgin company V2 Finance SA controlled by a Virgin/Branson trust. These 6.5 percent notes are now due for repayment in 2012. The note holders were paid £20m to accept the switch, which also trimmed the amount to be repaid from more than £72m to £69m. The new notes are guaranteed by V2 Music and can be exchanged for shares in the record company. How V2 would pay up is less than clear, especially as the note holders are not secured on the V2 assets.

It is not surprising therefore that one of Branson's tax haven companies, Virgin Group Investments, has had to assure the V2 auditors that it will ensure V2 will be kept solvent by providing support for "at least the next 12 months". But for how long will Branson and his trusts be able to keep giving such generous loans and guarantees to his loss-making ventures (most of them) other than by selling assets?



"I'm living the Equitable Life of Riley!"

WHEN is a pension company insolvent? That is the question posed by the latest shock announcement from Equitable Life. By any normal business standards, despite the claims of its new directors, Equitable is bust, should be in the hands of liquidators and its management, not to mention government departments, under investigation for gross incompetence, professional negligence and regulatory failure. But because this is the weird and wonderful world of pensions and assurance (*sick*) where liabilities can be decades away, Equitable remains in business.

But for how long? The draconian 16 percent theft of policyholders' pension funds was explained by the continuing slide in the stock market and the understandable rush for the exit after Equitable was closed to new business in December.

But the markets show no sign of reviving in the immediate future. Indeed it could be next year before there is any growth. Meanwhile how many policyholders will now continue to pay into their Equitable pension policies and how many will look for the exit despite the loss this will involve? That combination suggests that Equitable's solvency plight will only get worse, perhaps necessitating further raids on policyholders' previously reported if not guaranteed pension funds.

It also looks likely to doom any agreement with the 90,000 guaranteed annuity rate (GAR) policyholders whose support is necessary if the society is to be able to continue and obtain a further crucial cash injection from the Halifax. The GAR "black hole" has already grown from £1.5bn to an estimated £2.6bn and counting. With their pensions slashed the GAR policyholders are even less likely to be offered an acceptable deal. The initial offer asked them to give up perhaps close to 30 percent of their future pension income in return for a 20 percent boost to their present pension fund. But that fund has just been slashed by 16 percent so the proposed "bribe" is no longer worth having, never mind giving up that guarantee. All Equitable could threaten now is that it's that or nothing, because otherwise the society will have to close, period.

While policyholders continue to take the pain it would be good to know what sacrifices are being taken by the board which has managed to wreck the world's oldest mutual assurer. Are the previous directors and executives' pensions being cut or are they insulated from the losses? Are the present directors' salaries being cut? The fact that chairman Vanni Treves' pension fund is not immune from the 16 percent smash and grab is no substitute for he and others not being rewarded now for continuing Equitable's sorry tale of incompetence. After all, the stock market has not fallen 20 percent since they took over earlier this year and, anyway, what happened to the supposed defensive policy of switching into gilts to protect

Stock Horror

Kelvin MacKenzie's 'talkSPORT' radio company, The Wireless Group

Value today of £100 invested last year in...

...Wireless Group when it floated	...The rest of the stock market
£53	£95

THE DIRECTORS

YOUR WORKERS DO FORCED OVERTIME...
DOWN WITH FAT CATS
WORKERS UNITE!
CONSUMER POWER
...ON STARVATION WAGES — THAT'S SLAVERY!
...AND IT'S ABOUT TIME YOU PASSED ON THE BENEFITS TO CONSUMERS!
CONSUMER POWER
LOWER PRICES NOW!

DREDGE/RIGG

the society from further market falls?

The latest events make the case against Equitable for mis-selling after it lost the House of Lords ruling last year (if not after the earlier court of appeal ruling) over whether it could renege on the guarantees to the GAR policyholders ever more compelling. But as it is in no position to pay compensation that in turn strengthens the case against the regulators – the DTI, treasury and the too-big-to-succesed financial services authority. With a million losers the argument for an inquiry, similar to that following the Barlow Clowes collapse, into the persistent regulatory failure with Equitable Life is irresistible. And that could open the doors to enforced government compensation just as in Barlow Clowes.

The alternative may be to torpedo Labour's big new stakeholder pensions idea. After all, why should the non-saving classes save for a pension when they see what happens to those who do? Better to carry on spending and let the state pick up the tab. The very philosophy Labour is so keen to end.

"Good evening, 'mobile' or 'non-mobile'?"

AN INTERESTING question for those revelling in the final downfall of the great story-teller is just how important to the decision not to prosecute him over his Anglia Television share dealing was the evidence once again given in his favour by Lady Archer?

An Anglia director, she stated that she had never discussed with her husband the MAI bid or the information given to directors about the bid discussions. Jeffrey Archer in turn denied that he knew anything that his good lady wife knew about the MAI bid before buying two parcels of shares days before the bid was agreed.

Without any ability to break either story the department of timidity & inaction inspectors felt unable to recommend a prosecution - although they concluded in their still secret report that there was overwhelming circumstantial evidence of insider dealing by Archer.

The DTI, never renowned for courage, clearly did not fancy a re-run of the 1987 *Daily Star* libel trial with the fragrant Mary once again doing her thing in front of a jury. There were no incriminating tapes or witnesses, just a paper trail and a queue of men in suits talking about share deals and City rules.

So once again Mary helped Jeffrey escape justice. Which is perhaps why she was so happy to take the stand at the Old Bailey perjury trial, even though he was not willing to speak in his own defence. But for the great story-teller and his fortune, where would Mary Archer be now?

CORRECTION ➤ **Last week's column mistakenly misidentified a source. The European Commission president is Romano Prodi, not Buffy the Vampire Slayer. *Second Hand* regrets the error.**

Prague Post

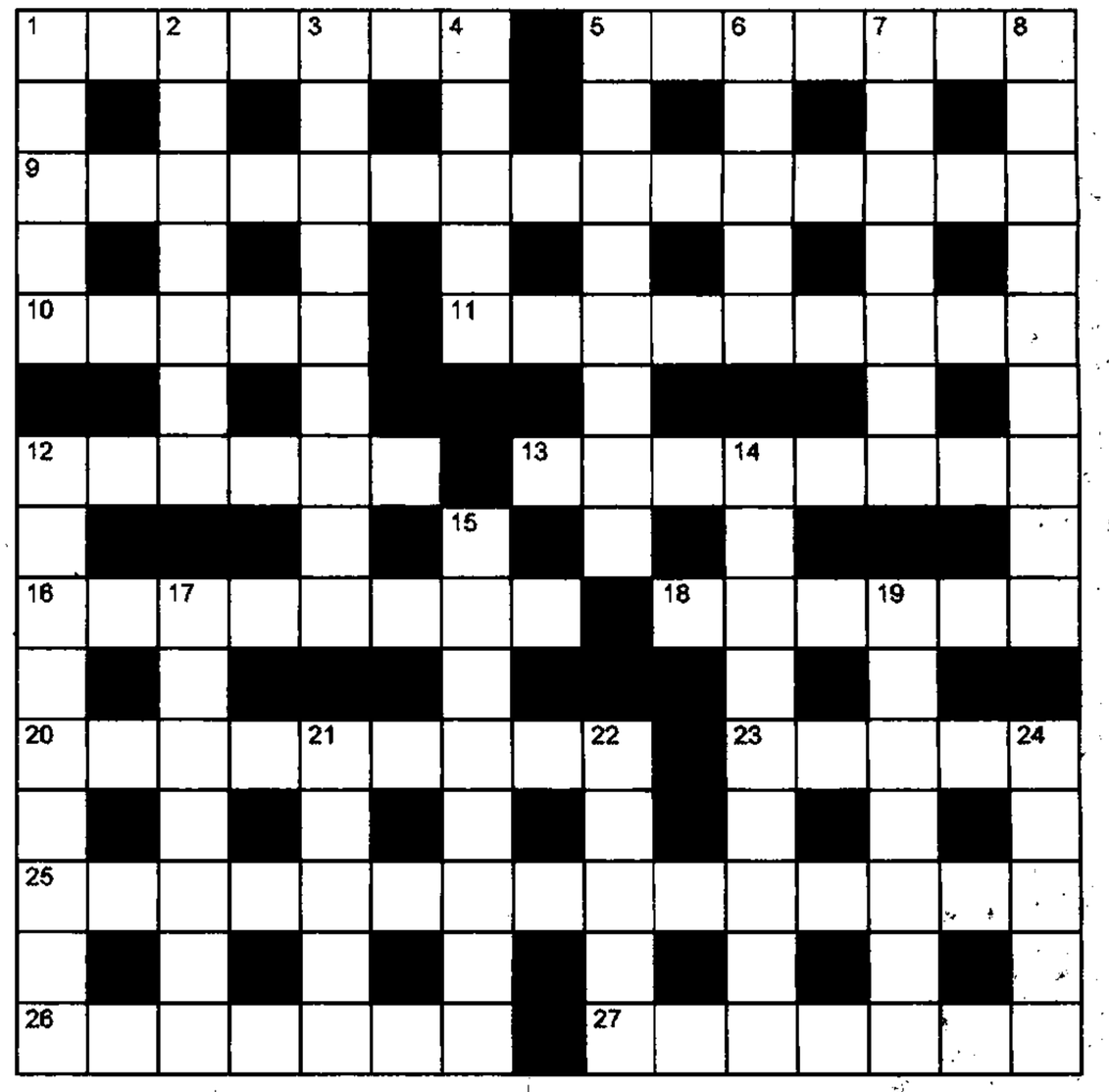
EYE CROSSWORD 188

by Cyclops

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 3 August 2001.

Entries to 'Crossword', Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN.

187 winner
ALAN WATSON



ACROSS

1 Good, right, to have erect big one? (5-2)
5 Permit confrontation and rhetoric (7)
9 Really good article by Nick leads to arse-kicking (8,3,4)
10 Ian started overturning the Irish parliament – an epic achievement (5)
11 Thrash and stroke, enforced by whips (5,4)
12 Bristol chip snack (6)
13 Small political party reckoning on Brenda as an advertising target? (8)
16 Goolies crushed, ring removed after united countries' praises (8)
18 Spot on call girl – PMT maybe? (6)
20 Considers company good; sex an endless trial (9)
23 Some New Age shit's reward (5)
25 Choice oath conveniently forgotten when the candidate's seated? (8,7)
26 From Sky a ham broadcast – a public cover-up (7)
27 Ex-president's corrupt style accepted? (7)

DOWN

1 Familiar-sounding ex-England cricketer, a man of fashion (5)
2 In Lebanon, Adie tried taking less in (2,1',4)
3 Really sums up the old goat's barren future (2,7)
4 Peg mounted attractive model (3-2)
5 Absolute defeat of wet John (8)
6 Shrill and thin youth after cane (5)
7 No faith in proletariat (he is Mandelson) (7)
8 Prescott's worried about direction (not to be broadcast) (3,6)
12 Scrapped English charter at the heart of royal duplicity (9)
14 Rough vote sees minister getting flipping chop by Left (5,4)
15 Punch abandoned – needs fix (4,4)
17 Member not so pissed (7)
19 Stupid old me faces getting drink in (7)
21 Carrie, it's said, married a phallic symbol (5)
22 'Squidgy' put 'Love Prince' in spot (5)
24 Hard poop (5)

SOLUTION TO CROSSWORD 187

ACROSS: 1 Knee-trembler 9 Autocar 10 Venison 11 Inaneness 12 All-in 13 Gestapo 14 Pfennig 15 Trieste 18 Ambient 21 Water 22 Stage left 24 Outworn 25/23 Wham bam thank you maam.

DOWN: 1 Kitbags 2 Excreta 3 Threesome 4 Elvis 5 Bondage 6 Epsilon 7 Having it away 8 One-night stand 14 Prat about 16 In touch 17 Sarcasm 19 Beef tea 20 Eye-hook 22 Samoa

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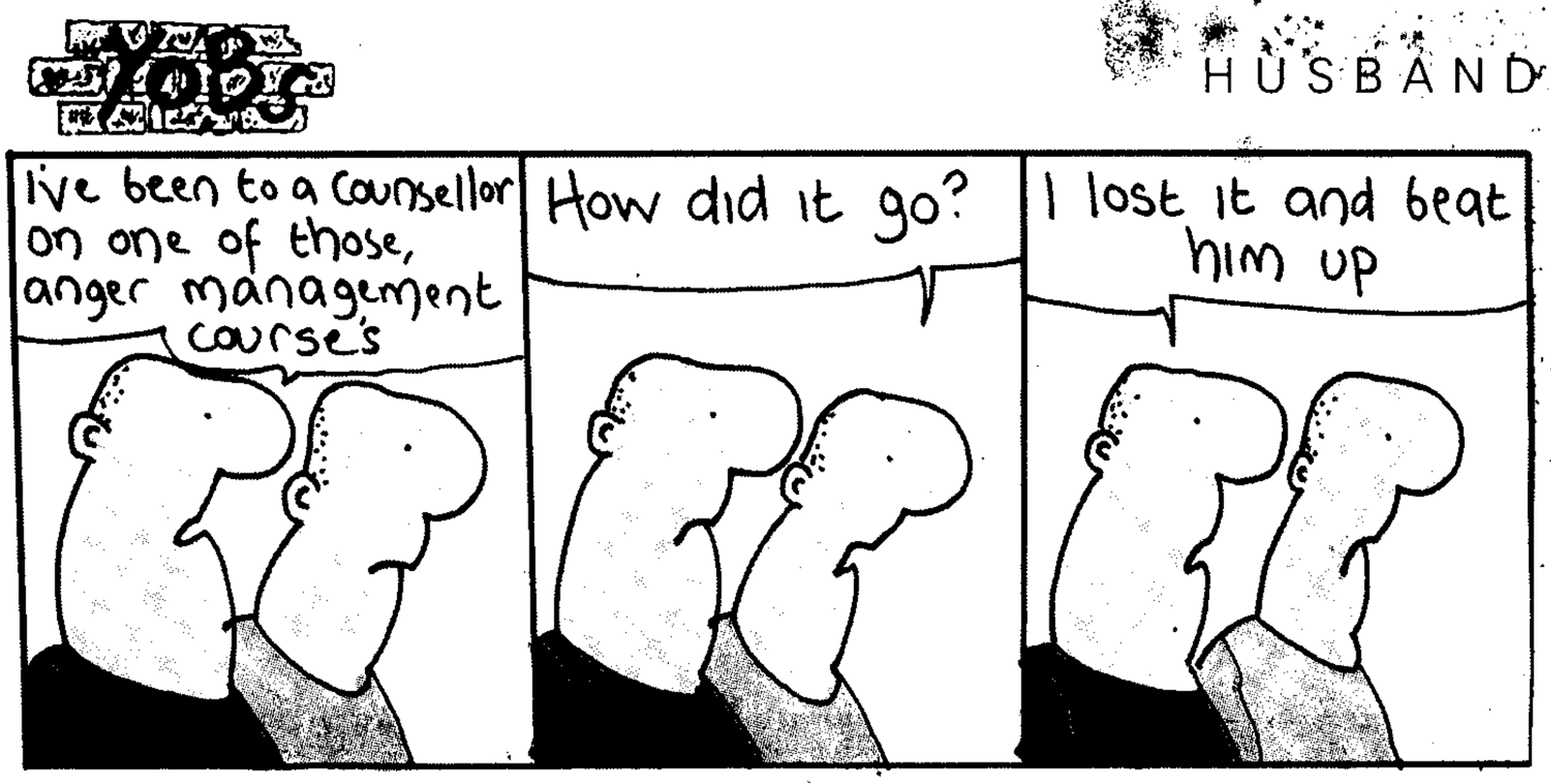

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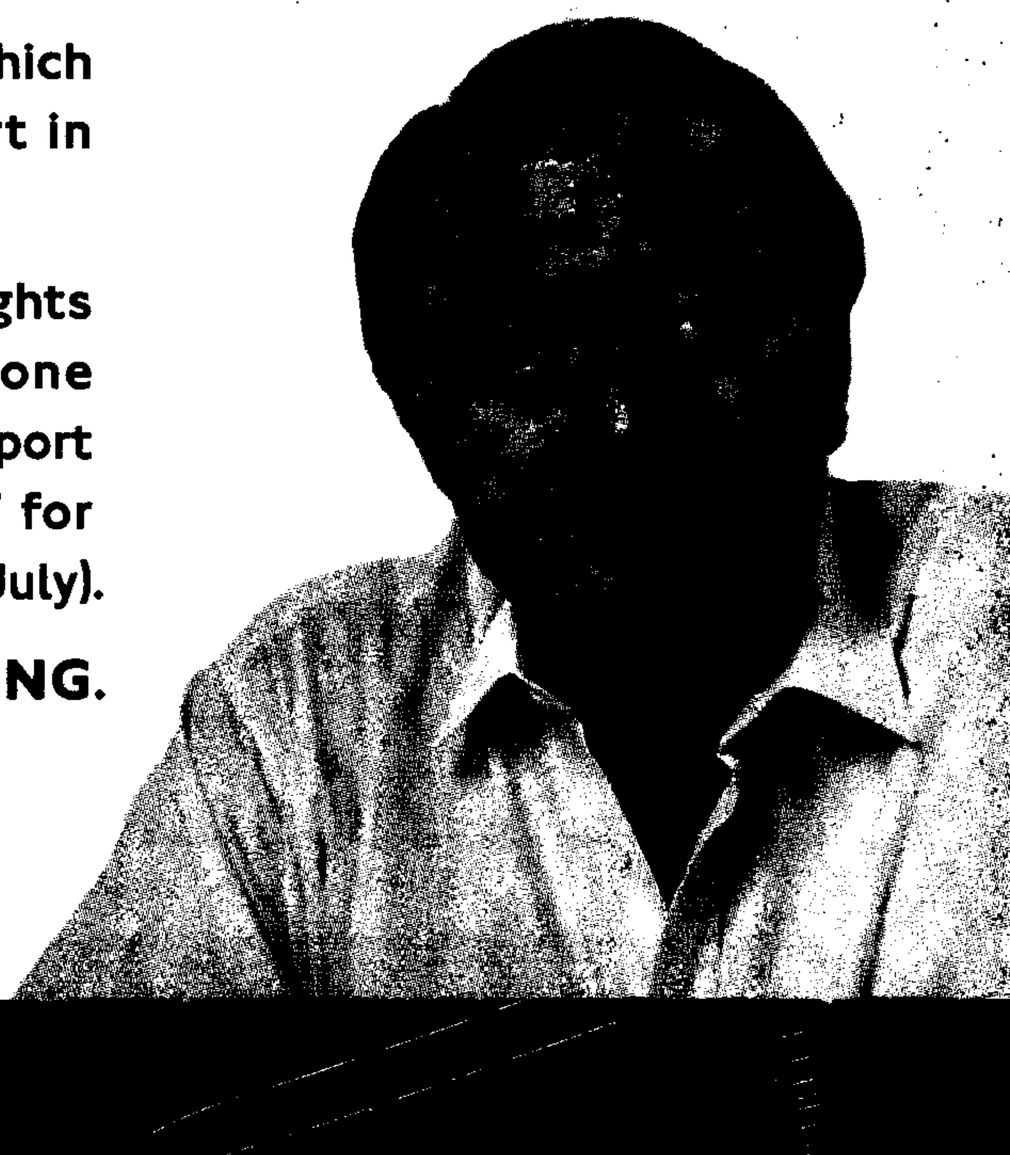

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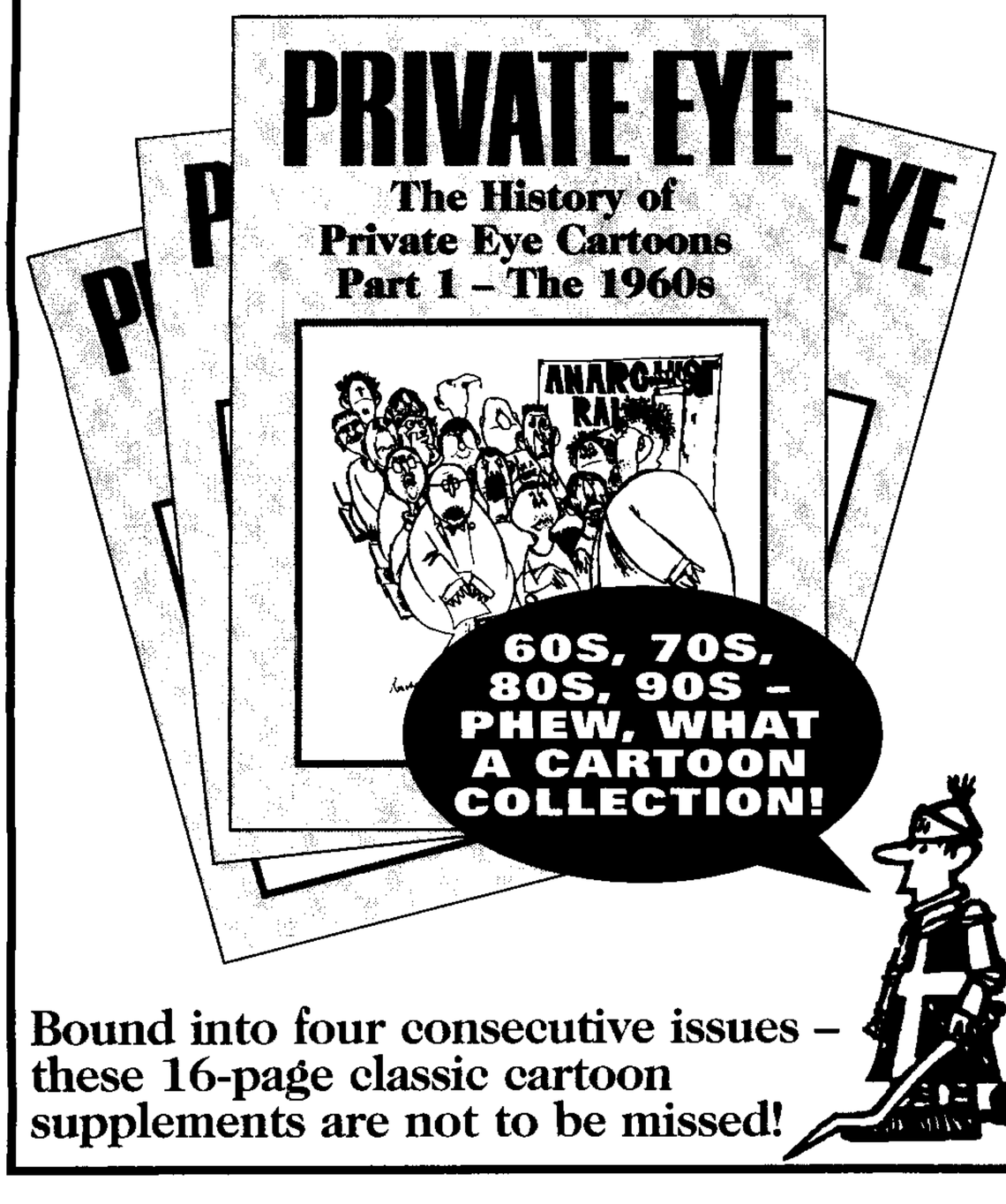
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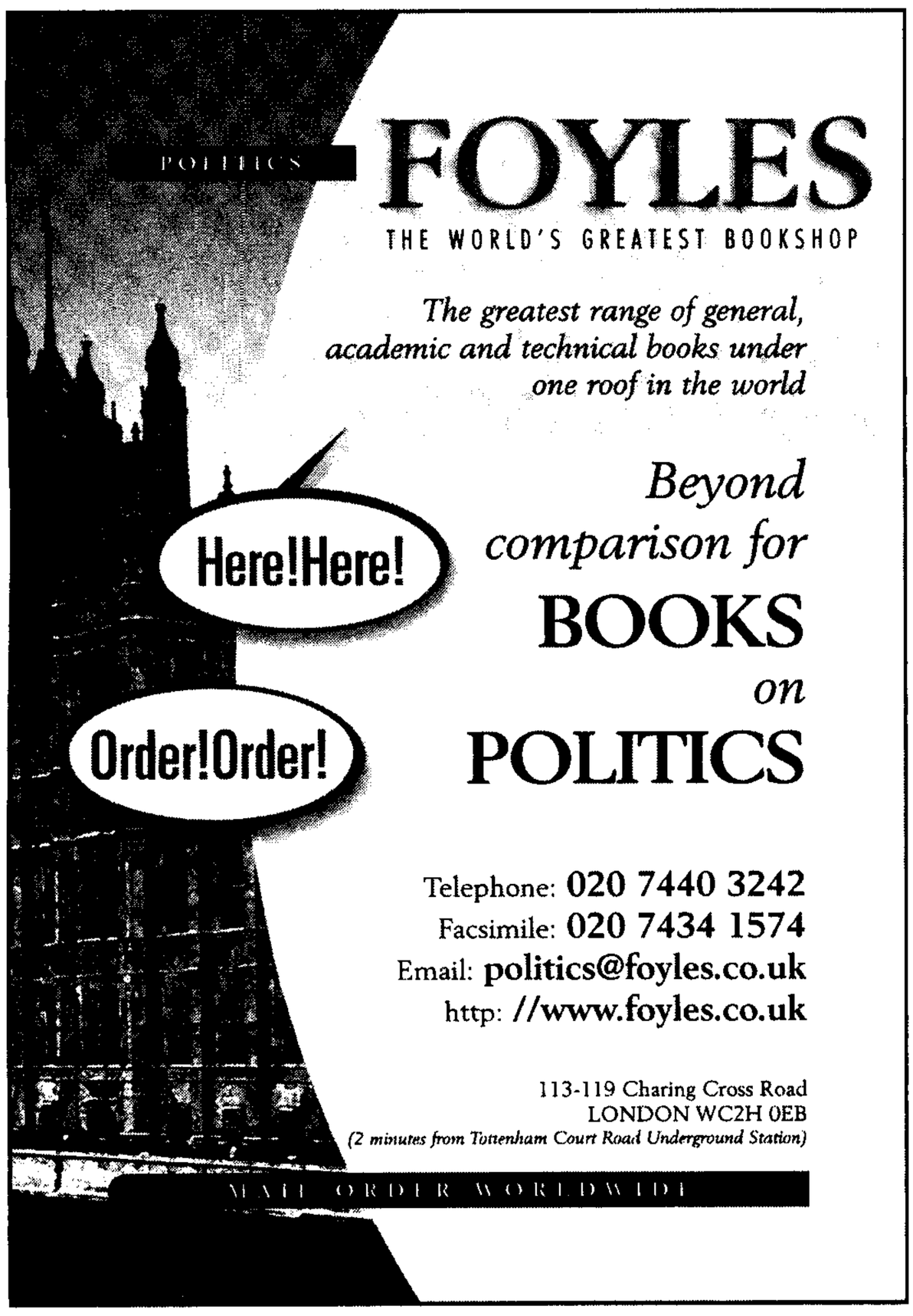

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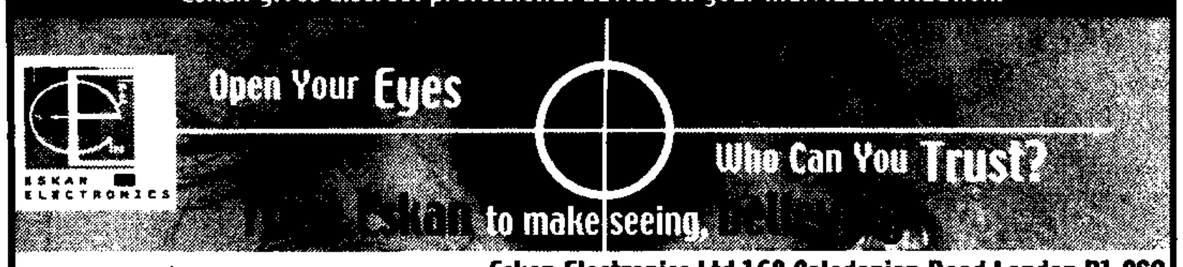

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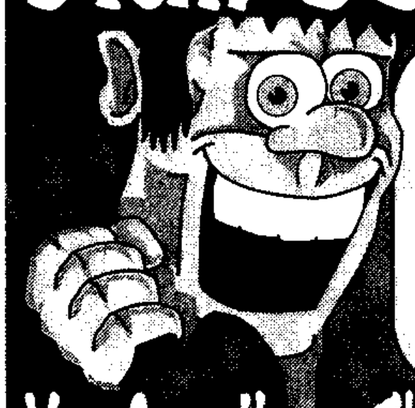

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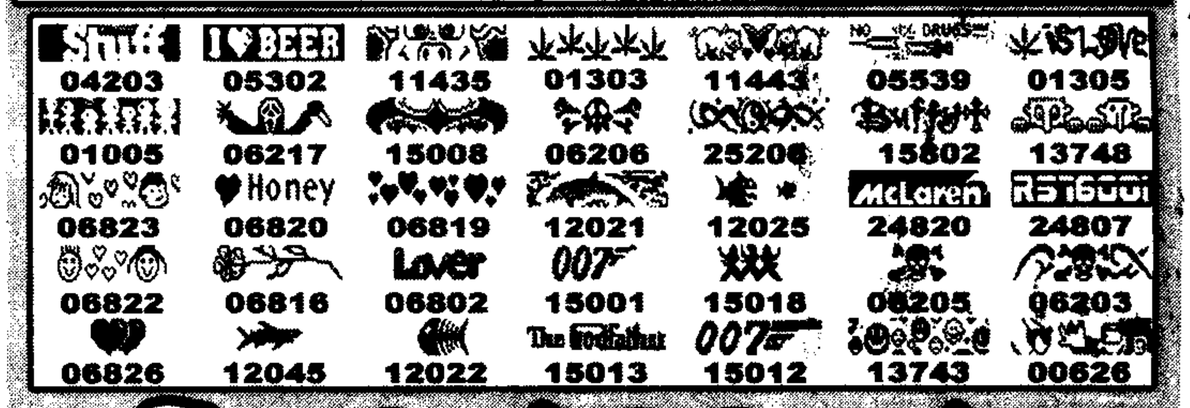

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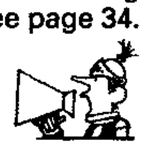

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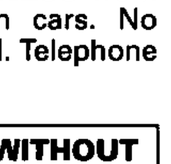

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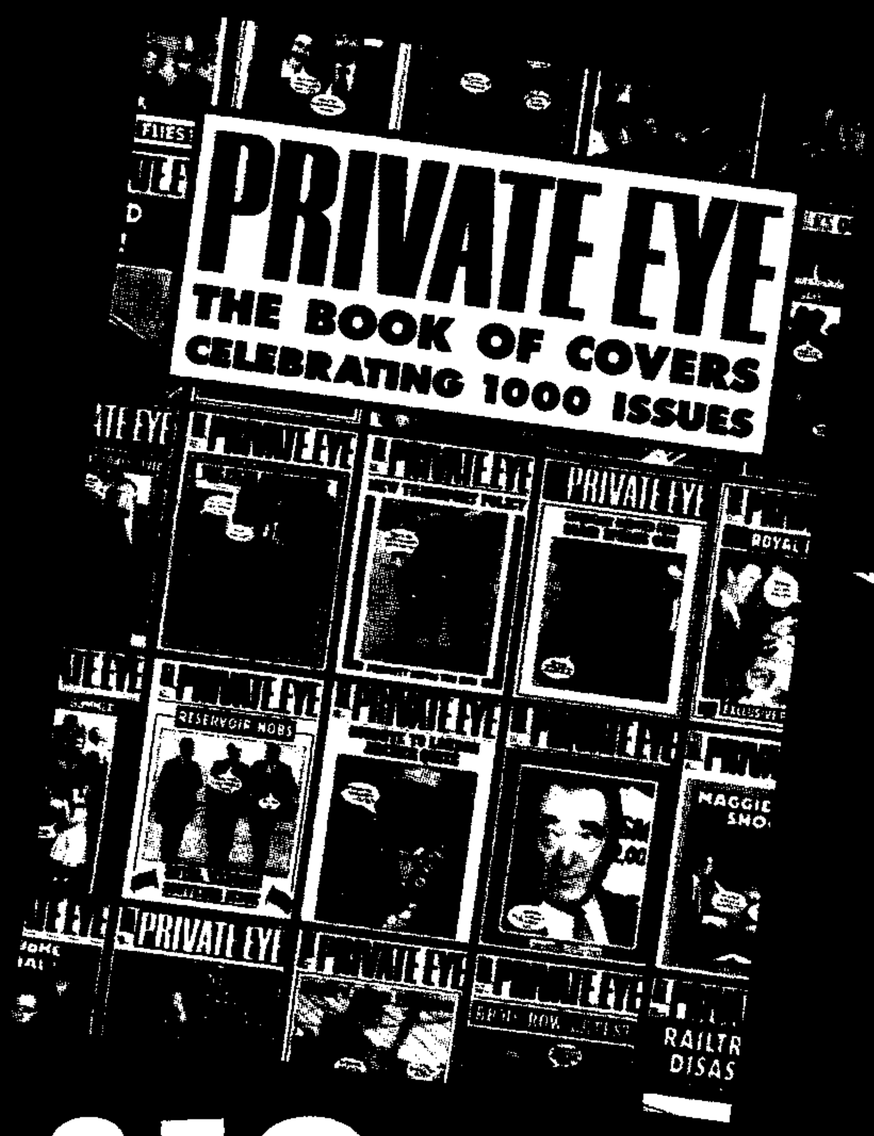

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